

PROMISING PRACTICES: TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON SUCCESSFUL  
READING STRATEGIES EVIDENCED IN FIRST GRADE BILINGUAL  
CLASSROOMS

by

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## Abstract

**Background:** “Some teachers have learned to be satisfied with their students simply reading accurately” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, p. 272). However, reading capacity extends beyond a student’s ability to read with accuracy and fluidity. Reading capacity should also emphasize comprehension and other useful literacy concepts. Literature suggests that teachers are vital indicators of a literacy program’s success (Reizian, Vazzano, & Wiencek, 1999). Studies further indicate that to promote learning and reading achievement for all students, teachers should plan their instruction to meet the needs of all learners (Ford & Opitz, 2011; Iaquinta, 2006). Such teachers provide various instructional strategies that include guided reading, modeling, and read-alouds. Also, students’ interest in text content has been found to promote the development of connections between the text, their prior knowledge, and real-world experiences (Au, 2002). **Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perspectives about the use of guided reading in their first-grade bilingual classrooms. This study addressed the following question: What do bilingual teachers consider as effective practices for implementing guided reading instruction? **Methods:** A basic qualitative study design was used to uncover the instructional strategies participants deemed effective with instruction in their bilingual classrooms (Merriam, 2009). The qualitative data included researcher field and observation notes, researcher journal entries, and interview responses from a convenience sample of three bilingual teachers. Interview data sets were analyzed using constant comparative analysis which utilized iterations of manual coding to determine common themes related to literacy instructional strategies in bilingual

classrooms. Participants interviewed were three Latinx first-grade teachers in inner-city bilingual (Spanish/English) classrooms located in a major city of the southwestern United States. Findings were member checked with participants and peer-debriefing to check for accuracy and researcher bias. **Results:** Teacher interviews revealed several promising practices commonly employed among participants in promoting student reading achievement in their bilingual first-grade classrooms. Participants shared that consistent modeling, instruction using the components of guided reading, and parental involvement assisted in improving students' reading achievement and engagement. Participants agreed that students need multiple opportunities to read books on their reading level, as well as self-selected books of interest. Also, participants concurred that guided reading instruction should be leveled and continuously changed to align with each student's developing reading abilities. Furthermore, participants suggested that students at each reading level have varied needs, which requires teachers to focus on individual student needs and strengths. Finally, through read-aloud activities, the participants utilized think-alouds and asked open-ended questions at varying levels of difficulty in which students verbally responded to their teacher, frequently talked with a partner about the content of narrative stories, or written information to respond to comprehension items. **Conclusion:** Research findings emphasized the importance of engaging students in all components of balanced literacy during the reading block in order to optimize literacy capacity and comprehension development. Additionally, providing various opportunities for students to practice, listen, and share their thinking about reading are essential to improve literacy capacity. Other identified factors in bilingual first-graders' reading achievement include

continuous modeling by the teachers, daily structured guided reading instruction, and parental engagement.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

A frustrated child gazes at the pages of a book with confusion and an obvious expression of disinterest. This child is wondering, why do I have to do this? Why am I reading this? Let me fake it, so it will seem like I am reading. As I observe the child, I ponder two challenges that lay before me. How am I going to build confidence and foster a love of reading in this child? Secondly, what I can do to better service this student? Unfortunately, this child is but one example of the many students that most teachers will encounter often or at some point in their classrooms. These are children who have little or no interest in reading and may even believe themselves to be weak readers. The reason they often harbor these negative opinions about reading is because they are not proficient readers and lack confidence as a reader. As a first grade teacher, I am presented with the duty and task of teaching students to read. Not only teaching them to read, but also to understand what they are reading coupled with the underlying yet prominent goal of them developing an adoration for reading. I want them to fall in love with books. There is not a manual for teaching kids to read, no miracle potion or prescription, or a how-to guide. It is through the exposure of a variety of books and continual reading and fluency practice that gets kids' reading. As I reflect on my teaching, I think about the twenty-one students ready and eager to be taught and excited to learn. But, amongst them are students who will also require extra teacher support while reading. Educators may sometimes ask themselves: What is the most effective instruction for students to be successful readers? What are some promising literacy strategies to support these readers? With so many reading products and an abundance of literary research such as basals and theories behind

a child's development, teachers often find themselves overwhelmed and at a loss to know the most effective practices for implementing the best approach to teach reading effectively. This makes reading instruction even more significant in a child's education (Lewis, Mahdavi, & Menzies, 2008). Teachers should plan their instruction for meeting the needs of different learners. Literature suggests that teachers are key indicators of a literacy program's success (Reizian, S., Vazzano, J. M., & Wiencek, B. J., 1999). Studies have shown that a balanced literacy approach has been proven to be effective in laying the foundation for a strong literacy background. Balanced literacy is an approach to teaching reading that focuses on incorporating research-based practices for successful readers. (Bingham, G. E., & Hall-Kenyon, K. M., 2013; Bitter, Gubbins, O'Day, & Socias, 2009; Frey, B. B., Lee, S. W., Massengill, D., Pass, L., & Tolleffson, N., 2005; Hurst, K., & Shaw, D., 2012). Numerous researchers also agree that balanced literacy is a combination of a skill-based and whole language approach with a high use of authentic literature (Bitter et al., 2009; Cassidy, J., & Ortlieb, E., 2013; Donat, D. J., 2006; Duffy, A., 2001; John, T. L., 2016; Hurst, K., & Shaw, D., 2012; Pearson, D., 2004; Reizian, S., et al., 1999). One of the four reading components of balanced literacy is guided reading. Guided reading allows teachers to individualize and scaffold students' reading (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S., 1996). The advantage to guided reading is the specific support that the teacher gives students according to their reading behaviors, which vary depending on the students reading level. This approach provides a catalyst for differentiated instruction and acts as the first component to meeting students' varied literacy needs within the classroom. In small groups, students are assembled based on similar needs and the teacher has more one-on-one time with students as opposed to whole group instruction

(Fisher, D. & Frey, N., 2010; Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S., 1996; Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 2012). Proficient readers use the knowledge acquired through whole group and take it into guided reading. During this time, teachers will observe students applying reading strategies and notice what strategic actions students are using for making meaning out of text. There are many advantages to guided reading, but also disadvantages that can result if the teacher does not plan effectively. If the teacher fails to offer research-based centers while they are implementing guided reading with a group, it can lose its purpose and prove to be a wasteful 20-30 minutes (Gunning, T.G., 2004). This is why lesson planning with attention to guided reading groups and student placement is a key characteristic for successful guided reading (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 2012). By developing a game plan for each student, we guarantee that as educators we are delivering instruction that has been thoughtful and strategic.

### **Problem Statement**

“Some teachers have learned to be satisfied with their students simply reading accurately” (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 2012, p. 272). Reading proficiency and fluency extends far beyond being able to read a word correctly and quickly. This erroneous way of thinking has led to many students reading ‘on level’ without any true understanding of the text. Comprehension allows children to experience the text both orally and reading (Dougherty Stahl 2016). Students should be reading with a purpose in order to continue to want to engage within text. If a student reads with interest, the student will be able to make meaningful connections with the text and interact with open-ended questions that go beyond a yes or no response. Without comprehension, students are not really reading. Whether students are reading for pleasure or reading to acquire

information, students should be continuously monitoring their understanding. In an effort to aid in this process of comprehension, it is essential to model for young readers how to think about the text. Guided reading allows young readers to read a new text and use what they already know about the topic to make meaning of new information. The more experiences and time the student has, the more schema they will be able to use in understanding new information. During this crucial reading time, the teacher models for students how to use the text structure to understand information in a new book (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 1996; Gunning, T.G., 2004; Hall, H., 2014).

### **Need for the Study**

A study of the effectiveness of guided reading as well as other components of balanced literacy in first-grade bilingual classrooms to improve student reading comprehension and fluency could be the bridge to closing achievement gaps in young readers. “Learning to read and write in those early years is pivotal: children who are not successful by the end of grade three have little chance of ever becoming fully literate” (Willows, 2008, p. 20). For many years, research has provided educators with an abundance of studies on teaching reading to students. Educators will be able to implement the ideas from this study into their classrooms. Educators with similar student demographics can learn about literacy strategies from teachers like themselves. Teachers will connect to the educators in this study and strengthen their instruction. This study will help educators of reading to include all components of a balanced literacy framework and not just certain aspects. This study will elevate all components of reading instruction (specifically, within a bilingual elementary framework) because balanced literacy encompasses reading and writing for literacy improvement.

## **Purpose/Significance of the Study**

If a child does not have a strong research-based reading foundation, this child may fall behind academically in both reading and writing in later grades (Foorman, B. R., & Torgesen, J., 2001; Lewis et al., 2008; Willows, D., 2008). Teachers should be “ensuring that all students are exposed to high quality instruction in the general classroom” (Bouton et al., 2013, p.136). Reading is an essential part of being successful in school, which in turn leads to success in all aspects of life. Reading is crucial to comprehend all content areas. Critical thinking, creating meaning with the text, and comprehension are skills needed to analyze text and the world around. Providing teachers with confirming information or providing new information can help teachers incorporate these research based findings in their daily reading instruction. The purpose of this study is to--- explore teachers’ perspectives and use of reading strategies in guided reading their first-grade bilingual classrooms.

A study of the importance of implementation of literacy strategies used by teachers in a first-grade bilingual classrooms is essential for the educational world for a variety of reasons. Guided Reading is one component of balanced literacy that allows teachers to get to know their students strengths and areas of need, especially if a students might be in risk of reading failure, “but they must acquire the same set of skills to become good readers” (Foorman, B.R., & Torgesen, J., 2001, p. 206). Teachers will share what they do in their classrooms to support student reading achievement. This reading time should be purposeful, strategic, and consistent. This study will support prior studies conducted on the importance of incorporating all aspects of the balanced literacy program for student reading achievement.

## **Research Question**

- What do bilingual teachers consider as effective practices for implementing guided reading instruction?

## **Definition of terms**

The following are the operational definitions used in this study:

Achievement Gap: The “achievement gap” in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students (Ansell, S., 2004).

Balanced literacy: a philosophical perspective that seeks to combine, or balance, skill-based and meaning-based instruction in order to ensure positive reading and writing results in children (Bingham, G. E., & Hall-Kenyon, K. M., 2013, p.15).

Basal reading program: is a comprehensive program of teaching reading that includes readers or anthologies that gradually increase in difficulty, teacher’s manuals, workbooks, and assessment measures (Gunning, T.G. 2004, p. 447).

Reading Comprehension: for the purpose of this study comprehension will be defined as, the process of reading (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 1996, p. 156).

Guided Reading: is a small-group instructional context in which a teacher supports each reader’s development of systems of strategic actions for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 2017, p. 12).

Reading Instruction: “I define reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced. My definition states that within the directional constraints of the printer’s cue, language and visual perception

responses are purposefully directed by the reader in some integrated way to the problem of extracting meaning from cues in a text, in sequence, so that the reader brings a maximum of understanding to the author's message" (Clay, M., 1991, p.6).

Strategic Actions: represent twelve categories within which we have clustered what are probably thousands of simultaneous actions that the brain engages in while reading they are; searching for and using information, monitoring and self-correcting, solving words, maintaining fluency, adjusting, summarizing, predicting, making connections, synthesizing, inferring, analyzing, and critiquing (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 2017, p. 201).

Text Gradient: A gradient of text reflects a defined continuum of characteristics against which you can evaluate texts. The gradient provides a basis for analyzing texts and organizing them for instruction (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 2017, p. 294).

Text level: There are twenty-six levels. A leveled set is a collection of books in which processing demands have been categorized along a continuum from easiest to hardest. The continuum is based on a combination of variables that support and confirm readers' strategic actions and offer problem-solving opportunities that build the reading process. The "level" of a text has everything to do with an expansion of a readers' systems of strategic actions (Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S., 2017, p. 294).

Whole Language Approach: children are explicitly taught the relationship between letters and sounds in a systematic fashion, but they are being read to and reading interesting stories and writing at the same time (Frey, B. B., Lee, S. W., Massengill, D., Pass, L., & Tolleffson, N. 2005, p. 272).





## **Chapter II**

### **Review of the Literature**

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), 69 percent of 4th grade students reading achievement from the United States school system is at or above “basic level.” Which has greatly increased in previous years, but according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading is still poor and has not improved (Wren, 2001). With this up to date finding, what exactly does this mean for educators? Reading instruction is more prevalent than it was a century ago. “The focus needs to shift to the student and the individual learning needs that can be revealed through assessment “(Wren, 2001, p. 5). This chapter will address the foundation of balanced literacy and its impact on reading instruction over the years. I will also share findings of balanced literacy in urban elementary schools. Another section will discuss guided reading and its implications with Hispanic students.

### **Balanced Literacy**

Throughout the years, many researchers continue to debate the most effective early reading instruction (Reizian, Vazzano, & Wiencek, 1999; Pearson, 2004). Balanced literacy has dated back many years. Balanced literacy was first introduced from California Department of Education in 1996. Since then and now balanced literacy has been a framework of choice by many schools. Before balanced literacy, there were two different approaches to teaching literacy that were debatable in the late 1980’s; whole language and phonics (Frey, Lee, Massengill, Pass, & Tolleffson, 2005; Pearson, 2004). Each approach had its own beliefs and each approach had its benefits, as well as its setbacks (Wren, 2001). The whole language approach focuses on the individual child as a

learner who uses their environment to make connections to their own understanding of reading. Whole language is about allowing children to find meaning to a text (Bingham, & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Frey, et al., 2005; Hurst, & Shaw, 2012; Pearson, 2004; Wren, 2001). On the other end of the spectrum of balanced literacy is skills-based approach. This is another term for phonics. Phonics is explicitly teaching children the rules of common-word patterns and sounds they make (Bingham, & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Frey, Lee, Massengill, Pass, & Tolleffson, 2005; Hurst, & Shaw, 2012; Pearson, 2004; Wren, 2001). Phonics should be taught cohesively with a whole language approach (Pearson, 2004). Both of these approaches are embedded in balanced literacy. It is a balance between all of these approaches that makes balanced literacy a method of choice.

Balanced literacy incorporates both reading and writing during literacy instruction (Bingham, & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Frey, et al., 2005; Willows, 2008). Teachers must be knowledgeable in the eight components that make up a balanced classroom which are; reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing to prevent reading difficulties (Fountas, & Pinnell, 1996; Lewis, Mahdavi, & Menzies, 2008). Teaching reading is a skill that requires knowledge of and an understanding of the foundation of reading. The teacher is the one that makes the literacy learning critical for students (Reizian, Vazzano, & Wiencek, 1999). Teachers need to have a deep understanding who, what, when, and why of balanced literacy to teach students to read and write (Willows, 2008). Due to the hustle and bustle of teaching, some teachers don't concern themselves with thinking of the why? Especially when a teacher needs to prepare for Monday. Self-reflection in our instruction is beneficial for our teaching and our students (Willows,

2008). Teachers should also have a toolkit of research-based strategies for children (Lewis et al., 2008).

Research has proven the need to continue to find proven ways to teach primary reading (Willows, 2008). Researchers have demonstrated the limitations of balanced literacy studies. Some of these limitations include, finding consistency in the framework is detrimental to the success of the approach. Research proves the need for teachers to have an understanding of what balanced literacy is (Bingham, & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Frey, B. B. et al., 2005; Hurst, & Shaw, 2012; Lewis et al., 2008; Pearson, 2004; Wren, 2001). Because the definition of balanced literacy shifts, teachers might not understand what it means. Teachers need to have proper teacher development to comprehend this approach (Reizian, et al., 1999; Willows, 2008). In order for teachers to effectively teach and implement the balanced literacy approach they should have a strong foundation on teaching literacy skills for a variety of learners (Lewis et al., 2008). Many districts have implemented balanced literacy, but because of the controversy with the definition, it might look differently in various schools (Bitter, Gubbins, & Socias, 2009; Hurst, & Shaw, 2012; Pearson, 2004). These causes create an in-cohesive program due to the inconsistency of what is the correct way to implement balanced literacy. Another limitation that needs further investigation is the “unequal distribution of balanced literacy components and structures” (Hurst, & Shaw, 2012, p.8; Frey, et al., 2005, p. 279). Fountas and Pinnell (1996) state that all components of the balanced literacy program work cohesively together in reading and writing for success. What still remains to be explored, is the expectations and implementation of the eight components and what a balanced literacy looks like (Bingham, & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Bitter et al., 2009; Frey, et

al., 2005; Hurst, & Shaw, 2012). Teachers need to be knowledgeable in the purpose and use of each component of balanced literacy to execute it correctly in their classrooms (Reizian, et al., 1999). The key is to find balance between all aspects of literacy in instruction for continued reading success.

### **Research on balanced literacy in an urban elementary school**

The data on balanced literacy is not new information. Reports have proven its benefits to reading instruction along with its limitations for further research. In the next paragraphs I will address the findings.

In a study conducted by Frey, et al., in 2005, examined 32 high poverty elementary schools in grades K-5, most of the students participated in free or reduced lunch. Including 67 elementary teachers. The average experience is 4 to 9 years. Researchers wanted to find out how much time was devoted to each component in balanced literacy, what the set-up of the classroom environment is, and how does balanced literacy look in the school and the support of the administrators with the program.

The researchers collected data from (a) classroom observations, (b) classroom environment checklist, (c) school environment checklist, (d) teacher surveys, and (e) student group interviews. Only from 23 students from 21 schools were asked the student group surveys. Frey, et al. (2005) describes the components as follows:

- *Balanced literacy program.* Teachers were required to implement a 90 minute literacy block in the morning. During this time they conducted read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and writing

and other activities as the teacher desired. School administrators also provided professional development for teachers on components of balanced literacy.

- *Classroom observation form.* Observations were conducted three in each classroom by five graduate research students for 20 minutes during the literacy block. Using a partial-interval recording form, observers collected information on the classroom literacy activities, use of accountable talk, teaching strategies, and instructional time spent on phonemic awareness and concepts of print.
- *Classroom physical environment checklist.* The research students collected information on the classroom environment by looking at physical features like; literacy centers, classroom libraries, reading nooks, examples of students work.
- *School environment checklist.* 32 schools were evaluated using a checklist that looked for the office, hallways, and the library.
- *Teacher survey.* Teachers were asked to report on the frequency of literacy activities and the amount of time. They also rated their level of satisfaction with the resources provided to them.
- *Student group interviews.* Students in grades 2-5 were interviewed and asked to respond to four questions about reading and writing in their classroom.

The results of this research were divided by the collection of data. According to the classroom observation form, the activity that was observed the most was independent

writing with 20 percent, read alouds at 18 percent, independent reading was 17 percent, accountable talk was 18 percent, and conferencing was 34 percent. These reports concurred with the teacher survey responses. Teachers reported that most of the time was spent on independent reading and writing and read alouds. Not so much time was spent on guided reading and shared reading. Teachers spent an average of two hours daily on balanced literacy instruction. This time was divided into the components that teachers expressed they spent more time on. From the student group responses, they reported that instruction was spent the most during reading and writing. Classroom libraries were noted as well as an area for read alouds, but minimal small group areas, reading nooks, and directions on how students are to use the classroom library.

This study proved that teachers were implementing balanced literacy in their classrooms, although unequal distribution of each component was not entirely given enough time. However, there is no research that states adequate time for each balanced literacy component. Schools and districts have to be willing to completely change their schools as a whole. Teachers should be held accountable for making sure balanced literacy is taking place. Teachers and students learned about the importance of literacy in the classroom and it was evident from the student responses that learning was occurring.

Researchers Bitter, Gubbins, & Socias, (2009) examined utilizing a balanced literacy approach. During a time span of 2 years, researchers documented a San Diego program to answer these 2 questions; (a) to what extent was classroom literacy instruction consistent with the instructional approach that San Diego hypothesized as effective and (b) to what extent are these literacy instructional practices associated with increased student achievement? This study examined 9 high poverty K-5 elementary

school where 61 to 100 percent of students qualified for free or reduced lunch. The demographics of these schools were 25 to 79 percent of English Language Learners (ELL's). Data was collected using an observation protocol in classrooms 5 times over the course of the study. The observations were 90 minutes and data collectors noted teacher and student interaction, classroom activities, conversations, students on/off task. For tracking student achievement assessments were varied depending on grade level. For primary grades K-3, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) was conducted individually three times per year. Also, the Degrees of Reading Power assessment (DRP) was given to 2-5th grade students in the fall and spring.

The results from the observation protocol showed that instructional focus was placed on reading and not so much on writing and phonics. However, teachers shared that writing, phonics, and word study was taught outside of the literacy block which was not observed. There was a strong comprehension focus. Teacher's pose questions and students engaged in discussion through talk and writing. The observations noted that during student and teacher interactions, teachers were doing most of the telling of the information and not a lot of support to allow students to discover the answer on their own. This showed that teachers direct the conversations and direct the discussion. These results show that although teachers were implementing components of balanced literacy they were not entirely understanding the goal, which is to move instruction from teacher to students. Results from the reading assessments proved promising. Grades 3-5, who took the DRP showed consistently higher reading comprehension. According to the data the reason for higher comprehension was due to classroom instruction focusing on writing during the literacy block. The study confirms that instruction should focus on



“students’ creating meaning from the text and on supporting accountable talk in classroom interactions” (Bitter, J., Gubbins, & Socias, M, 2009, p. 38). As well as writing was an added benefit to reading comprehension.

### **Read-Alouds**

Read-alouds is one component of balanced literacy, which allows teachers to read to students and support them in their reading by modeling what good readers do (Wright, 2019). There are two approaches of read-alouds, one is asking questions after reading and the other is asking questions during reading (Barrentine, 1996). Asking questions after reading aloud is a more traditional way of conducting read-alouds. This allows the teacher to have more in-depth conversations about the text, instead of stopping during reading. During this time, students are making connections to the text and the teacher is clarifying any misunderstandings during reading (Barrentine, 1996; Fielding & Pearson, 1994). On the other spectrum you have interactive read-alouds. This differs from discussions after the text because the teacher is asking questions during reading, modeling their thinking, and the students are involved as well (Barrentine, 1996; Wright, 2018). “Interactive read-alouds encourage children to verbally interact with the text, peers, and teacher. This approach to reading aloud provides a means of engaging students as they construct meaning and explore the reading process (Barrentine, 1996, p. 36). During this time, students are not just focusing on reading comprehension, teachers are modeling for students how to monitor their own comprehension by modeling “how stories work, the relationship between page turning and moving through a story, how one reads, how one corrects and monitors reading/meaning, voice inflection and change, how language works, and what written language looks like (Barrentine, 1996, p. 38).

Modeling is a crucial component of read-alouds because of the planned modeling of strategies and “mental actions” students use during independent reading (Wright, 2018-2019, p. 7). It is during these conversations that students are having the opportunity to respond to the text during reading by making personal connections to the story, making predictions, inferencing, which allows them to internalize their new learning (Barrentine, 1996; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). The fact that the questioning is occurring during the read-aloud makes this a conversation between the reader and the text. The teacher and the students are thinking and talking at the same time (Wright, 2018).

It is imperative to remember that during a read-aloud teachers use their best judgement when it comes to time and too much questioning and conversations (Barrentine, 1996; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Wright & Lane, 2007). If the conversation is going to be lengthier, it is better saved for after reading. You want students to continue to listen to the story and enjoy it without too much disruption (Barrentine, 1996). Teachers should also consider the type of text. Teachers should choose a book for read-alouds that correlates to whichever instructional goal they are achieving. Teachers should expose students to a variety of genres, content areas, and cultures during read-alouds (Wright, 2018-2019). This time could be the only exposure students have on specific topics and this builds their knowledge, which can help them understand the text (Wright, 2018-2019; Fountas and Pinnell, 2017). This information can build students background knowledge which can improve students reading comprehension (Wright, 2018-2019). Teachers should also ensure that they are reading the book before-hand, thinking about “What is there to learn in the text? What good examples appear in the text? What is the central message of the text? (Fountas and Pinnell, p. 14, 2017).” And while doing this

teachers should post sticky notes to keep track of their thinking (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Teachers are asking various types of questions that elicit various responses for example, fill-in-the-blank, open-ended, who, what, when, where, why questions, and making connections (Wright & Lane, 2007; Dando, 2016) all of which can be strategically- planned during planning (Wright, 2018-2019).

### **Shared Reading**

Similar to read-alouds, shared reading allows the teacher to model specific strategic actions to students and read for a specific skill (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). However, shared reading does differ slightly from read-alouds. In shared reading, there is an enlarged piece of text that is visible for all students, it can be projected as well. This text is the same for all students and can be poems, songs, chants, plays, scripts or stories or parts of a story (Baker, 2013, Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Holdaway, 1982). The teacher can highlight specific text that they want students to notice as well as use pointers to track reading and make note of various print knowledge from the book (Baker, 2013). Shared reading allows the teacher and students to have some fun and enjoy the experience with students (Ezell & Justice, 2005; Baker, 2013; Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). The texts “must be engaging and pleasurable enough to be worthy of spending a whole-class or small-group time on them and/ or for students to read them again and again (Fountas & Pinnell, p. 105, 2017).” Shared reading experiences are occurred in a natural setting. Students and teachers alike feel “security and joy” with the books read during this time (Holdaway, p.64, 1982). Together they are active participants in the reading process (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). The teacher invites students to read alone at certain pages or lines or read with the teacher. This allows students to notice punctuation, copy the way

the teacher is fluently reading, and mimic the intonation, expression, and the rate of the teacher (Baker, 2013; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). During this time, the teacher is providing students with support as well as receiving support from their peers. Students are still engaged in discussion through questioning about the text, as well as the author's craft (Baker, 2013; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). According to Fountas and Pinnell (2017), when choosing a text for shared reading, there are ten text factors to consider. These are; genre, text structure, content, themes and ideas, language and literary features, sentence complexity, vocabulary, words, illustrations, and book and print features. Educators can use these factors to guide them in their curriculums, plan for instruction, and plan for assessments (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017).

Remember that reading is a pleasurable thing. Students should be immersed in books that are interesting and authentic. Shared reading is a time to create positive experiences for students with books. The only true way for students to begin to read and fall in love with reading, is reading (Holdaway, 1982; Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).

### **Independent Reading**

Independent reading is a designated time dedicated for students to read on their own or with a friend on books they choose (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996). Students are readers. As readers, they are self-selecting any type of text on their own. Most importantly problem solving on their own. Students are applying all of the reading strategies observed during shared and read-alouds, not to mention the strategies applied during guided reading. Independent reading also increases students' fluency because they are rereading books. It also increases sustained reading time and confidence (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Kelley & Miller, 2014).

Conferencing with students during independent reading, helps the teacher understand how the reader is growing and how they are going to help them become better readers depending on the observations and conversation (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009; Kelley & Miller, 2014; Moss, 2016). There are various conference charts to take notes during conferencing, choose whichever fits your classroom. As long as there is space for reflections and next steps. Kelley & Miller (2014), shares that she also takes pictures of her student's notes for rereading and reflecting on the conversations that occurred during reading conferences. They make a schedule to talk with each and every reader (Kelley & Miller, 2014). Creating a schedule will make the teacher accountable to meeting with each child. Students will begin to look forward to meeting with the teacher and believe it is important. Take about ten minutes each day and choose a student to observe. During this time have your conferencing chart and observe. Don't listen in. Don't move too close. Just watch. Watch what reading behaviors students are making (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009; Kelley & Miller, 2014).

When conferencing with readers during independent reading time, teachers aren't listening to students read, they are conversing about their reading and the information in their notes beforehand. Teachers are looking at a couple of things that readers are doing during independent reading time to assist them with goal making and next steps during conferencing; how they are as a reader, preferences, engagement, commitment, and selection (Kelley & Miller, 2014). When you are assessing how they are as a reader, teachers are looking at their reading level. These are found differently depending on the type of reading assessment used in districts. Each reader prefers a genre over the other. Identifying the type of books readers like will help either broaden their genre list or find

another book that might interest them (Kelley & Miller, 2014; Moss, 2016). This time also helps to identify if the student is reading a book that is too difficult or too easy. Don't "intervene unless they fail to make progress (Kelley & Miller, 2014, p.185)." You don't want to diminish a child from reading a book they really want, just because it is not on their level (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009). Lesesne noted, that most readers in time will advance their reading on their own through practice and rereading (as cited in Kelley & Miller, 2014, p.185). Engaged readers look very different. For some students, it is easy to get lost in a book, while others might need a few minutes to get settled in. "Engaged readers actively interact with text, seeking to understand what they have read (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p. 313)." Students are setting a purpose to read. Students are being held accountable for their own reading. A recording sheet will look different depending on the grade level. However, whether it is circling an emoji of the book they liked or writing the title of the book, it still serves its purpose. Students can have a folder, notebook or class chart to document their readings. This recording sheet helps the teacher and student set goals and reflect on their reading (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006, Kelley & Miller, 2014; Hudson & Williams, 2015). Conferencing also gives teachers clues about students commitment to a book and how they select their book. Self-reflection between reader and teacher is strongly supported through conferencing (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006, Kelley & Miller, 2014; Hudson & Williams, 2015).

Creating an environment in which students have time to read and feel comfortable reading is a realistic goal that can be implemented in schools across the world. Students have the ability to choose the books they want and can read. Share your love for books as well. Mention to students what you are currently reading. Connecting with students and

providing students' choice makes a huge difference in their engagement towards books (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009; Hudson & Williams, 2015). "Effective IR programs have the potential to not only increase student achievement but also motivate children to discover the love of reading that can last a lifetime (Moss, 2016, p. 2)."

### **Guided Reading**

As discussed earlier, guided reading is one of the eight components of balanced literacy. Each component works together to create a sustainable literacy instruction. Each component has its purpose in the literacy block. Each component should be executed with precision (Reizian, Vazzano, & Wiencek, 1999). Guided reading is one component which allows the teacher to individualize students learning and quickly provide feedback as students are reading. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2017) guided reading is defined as:

A small-group instructional context in which a teacher supports each reader's development of systems of strategic actions for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty (p. 12).

"In guided reading, teachers teach for a full range of strategic actions: word solving, searching for and using information, self-monitoring and correcting, summarizing information, maintaining fluency, adjusting for purpose and genre, predicting, making connections (personal, other texts, and world knowledge), synthesizing, inferring, analyzing, and critiquing" (Fountas & Pinnell, p. 399, 2008). With these demonstrations teachers share with students ways that readers talk and think. Teachers are listening to students read and are able to assist them when necessary (Burkis

& Yaris, 2016). This type of “facilitated learning” is supporting students on the same “instructional level” to read a book (Burkis & Yaris, 2016, p. 77). This information is then the students’ responsibility to take with them during their independent reading time. In order for students to be successful during this independent reading time, teachers choose an appropriate book utilizing a text gradient, for this study we will be using the text gradient by Fountas and Pinnell. This gradient allows the teacher to choose an instructional level book that will allow each reader to be successful, yet be challenging enough to give students the opportunity to practice and “apply what is taught, modeled, and practiced in the other instructional contexts” (Burkis & Yaris, 2016, p. 78). The teacher will support students in comprehension, fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and writing during guided reading. Students learn reading strategies that will enable them to successfully implement during reading time. Guided reading is the release of gradual responsibility. I do. We do. You do. The teachers is observing the students and watching as they make errors or their strengths and self-reflect on their own by them choosing what to do next (Burkis & Yaris, 2016). The teacher is listening and taking anecdotal notes on what students are doing. In turn, the teacher will use this information with the class during shared reading or independently (Burkis & Yaris, 2016).

Guided reading begins with a group of no more than 6 similar needs students, with a teacher chosen interesting instructional level text. The teacher previews the text and ensures that the text is appropriate for the students and that it also has some challenging areas that will allow students to use their strategies (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Burkis & Yaris, 2016). Students are invited to notice what they see, and initiate the conversation on what they think they will be reading. Teacher can also share a brief



introduction to the book (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Burkis & Yaris, 2016). During the reading, the teacher is the facilitator. The teacher is making notes and observing the students read and notice if they are implementing their strategic actions. Teacher supports students when they are struggling, but before assisting when needed, they will ask students “what will you try? Or what can you do next” (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017; Burkis & Yaris, 2016, p. 81). Students are immersed in the text and critically thinking about the text. They are solving problems and confirming their thinking. The teacher is there to guide the student if needed. After reading, the teacher is having a conversation with students about the text. A conversation between teacher and reader and between their peers (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017; Burkis & Yaris, 2016). Students can reread the text with a partner or on their own. “Revisit the text at points of problem solving as guided by the teacher” (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017, p.13). Students can answer questions or personally connect to the story (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017; Burkis & Yaris, 2016). Students are able to have discussion with their peers about the book, ask questions, share ideas. This is what we do as adults. We join a book club and can’t wait to share our thinking with our fellow readers (Burkis & Yaris, 2016). Students should be provided that same type of opportunity. Guided reading also has a writing and a word study component. Teacher can choose to work with students on various phonetic needs. Teachers can also choose to invite students to write or draw about their reading. This is a quick way to integrate writing in reading and it encourages them to “express their thinking about the text” (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017, p.15).

Guided reading creates an atmosphere in which students are excited to read. This is the time where students feel a sense of accomplishment. Guided reading is building

their confidence as readers (Burkis & Yaris, 2016). Guided reading can strengthen their needs and empower their strengths as a reader. You are also reflecting on the notes taken during guide reading. These notes will help you reflect on your instruction and how to better serve your students (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017).

### **Leveled books**

Leveled text, leveled books, or reading levels were first introduced by Marie Clay in (1972) (as cited in McLeod & Palmer, 2005). Marie Clay incorporated “little books” that were divided into 26 levels based on, “naturalness of text, close picture-text match, and predictability of text structure” (McLeod & Palmer, 2005, p. 18). Time has changed and we now have an abundance of leveled texts to choose from. Leveled text varies from simple to more complicated. Its purpose is to support students in fluency and comprehension (McLeod & Palmer, 2005). Teachers use these leveled books for guided reading and independent reading. During guided reading, teachers read with students in an instructional level. This means it is not too hard, too easy, but just right (Booth & Peterson, n.d.; Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Teachers should be wary of some publishing companies. Different companies use various leveling systems. Some just focus on a formulaic system versus a comprehensive approach (McLeod & Palmer, 2005). The criteria for leveling books A-Z get complex as the levels increase. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2017), there are ten characteristics to consider when analyzing the difficulty of the text; genre, text structure, content, themes and ideas, language and literary features, sentence complexity, vocabulary, words, illustrations, book and print features. *The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum* (2017) provides an in depth description of how the ten characteristics looks like in each level. But these characteristics are not the only

factor to determine the readability of the text. Teachers must take into account “the experience and background knowledge a student brings to the reading, the way you introduce a text to the students, and your supportive interactions with readers during and after reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 305). Every student enters school at various levels. Each reader reaches different goals. The text level gradient “should not be looked at as a requirement for each child to meet. Expectations have everything to do with the implementation of high-level, high-quality teaching” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p.324). Students can either meet their end of year goal, be above or below the requirement. If a child does not meet the end of the year goal, it does not mean they are at risk. What this information does tell teachers, is that we should strive to get students to their independent level for a “solid foundation” when they enter the next grade (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 324).

Reading levels do not determine a child’s ability. It is merely a way to allow teachers to understand where students are reading and if they are not reading at district mandated levels, what are the next steps to get them “on track” (Burkis & Yaris, 2016, p. 14). These levels provide some information on how students are according to their peers, but there is more to students than their level. “Knowledge of individual children and the way they approach texts is the most valuable tool” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 117). Reading levels do not tell us “how” a student reads, but using the level will allow us to begin learning about our readers (Burkis & Yaris, 2016, p. 24). Implementing guided reading where teachers spend a majority of their time listening, observing, and supporting students be more than a level, but be a reader.

### **Strategic Actions**

Throughout the entire balanced literacy framework teachers are consistently modelling strategic actions for students. These strategies are the ones students will implement as readers for the rest of their life. These set of strategic actions allow students to understand what they are reading and provides them a set of tools that they take with them during reading. In the following paragraphs I will discuss each and every strategic action according to Fountas & Pinnell's Guided Reading (2017).

Readers encounter a variety of texts throughout their entire school years. They are also required to understand what they are reading. Students should "search for and use information" in print and in language and meaning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Readers learn to distinguish how various texts work. Problem solving is a key indicator that students are searching for and using information in their texts. This involves asking themselves questions during reading to confirm their thinking (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017).

While reading, students are continuously problem solving and thinking to themselves if something is correct or not (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). In order to do this, students do a couple of things. According to Marie Clay (1993), students ask questions about their reading, "does it look right, sound right, and make sense" (as cited in Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p.197). All of these questions help students as they learn to solve unknown words in their text. They also try to solve words by using their background knowledge to understand what they are reading. As students continue to read for prolonged periods of time, they maintain fluency and adjust their fluency depending on the type of text and purpose they are reading. This supports their comprehension without having gaps to fill if they are decoding word by word or speeding through the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). As students are reading, they are summarizing the text and

maintaining the important parts of the text to understand. Readers also use the information that is given by the text and their vast background knowledge to anticipate what the text will be about, what will happen next, what word will be next or sentence throughout their reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017).

Thinking beyond the text allows the reader to dive deep into what they already know about their lives and the text. Students bring so much information with them when they enter school. Every experience is a memory that will help them to make connections with the books they will encounter. Every book read is a connection to another book they will read. As well as the experiences they are viewing in the outside world (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Readers open their minds to learn about other cultures, people, and the world around them. Books are windows, mirrors, and glass sliding doors to the outside world ("Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors, 2015). Windows which allow them to view things they might have never seen or will see. They can view themselves in a character that may look different from them, but might feel the same as them. Readers learn to sympathize with their characters ("Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors, 2015). Students are synthesizing all of this new information and challenging their mind to think outside their box (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Inferring about the text means that readers have to think about what the author is wanting to say but did not directly write in the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017).

Lastly, students think about the text by analyzing and critiquing. When readers analyze the text their thinking involves a deeper understanding of the text. Readers notice every aspect of how the author wrote and the illustrations or photographs provided in the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Readers are also forming their own opinions of the text.

They are identifying the genre, thinking about the characteristics, and thinking about the author's craft (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017).

## **Fluency**

“Reading fluency refers to rapid, efficient, accurate word recognition skills that permit a reader to construct meaning of text. Fluency is also manifested in accurate, rapid, and makes possible silent reading comprehension” (Pikulski & Chard, 2003). Hudson, Mercer, and Lane (2000), we must also consider expression, intonation, and prosody as a factor in fluency (as cited in Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005). Reading fluency is not just speed, it requires lots of attention (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). There are also some students that are decoding and making meaning of the text at the same time, which can take too much time (Pikulski & Chard, 2003). Newirk however suggests that a student might be a fluent reader, but the text might require the reader to read at a slower speed. Therefore, “there is no ideal speed; the speed for Newirk has to do with the relationship the reader has with the text he reads” (as cited in Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p.429). While reading students are making inferences, igniting their background knowledge and responding critically to the text. Once a student can read fluently, they do so across all the genres of reading (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005).

Reading fluency has a strong correlation to reading comprehension (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005). Fluency changes depending on the type of reading students are processing (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). If a student can read accurately they are able to understand the author's text. When a student reads accurately, they have a strong foundation of sounds, alphabetic principle, blending, and high frequency words (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005). However, if a student does not read accurately, they will have the

reverse effect. Instead of understanding the text, students will misinterpret the text. If a student reads slowly, this causes the student to lack “interpretation of the text” (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005, p. 703). As well as, poor prosody and expression can lead to “confusion through inappropriate or meaningless groupings of words” (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005, p.703). Students will gain prosody through continuous repeated readings (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005). However, Fountas & Pinnell (2017), believe that reading fluency is a process. It does encompass automaticity, prosody, expression

Supporting students with their fluency begins with teacher modelling how does good reading look like (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005). Teachers can use read-alouds and shared reading as a time to focus on fluency with repeated readings of a text, echo reading, choral reading, Readers Theater, or simply giving students an opportunity to practice during independent reading time (Pikulski & Chard, 2003; Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005; Burkis & Yaris, 2016). Allow students an opportunity to listen to audio books and read along. Time students reading in their independent level with a small passage and record their time. You also want to ensure that they are reading the text with 95-100 percent accuracy. Students will get excited to want to lower their time through readings (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005). Provide direct feedback to students as you listen to them read during guided reading or during independent reading time. Conferring with readers on what they can improve and how to improve, is a key factor in increasing reading fluency (Hudson, Lane, Pullen, 2005). It is important to remember that students who do not have fluency yet, need continuous support with decoding and sounds before attaining fluency (Palinsky & Pullen, 2003). Fluency is not the end goal of reading. It is only one

skill in reading, which means it should not be the entire focus during reading (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006).

## **Comprehension**

Comprehension can be defined in many ways. Teachers might define comprehension “as a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text” (Pardo, 2004, p. 272). Comprehension involves the reader. The reader is involved in making meaning of the text through engagement of the text (Pardo, 2004). Every reader is different. Every reader enters school with various experiences that enable them to connect to the stories they read, therefore understanding it better (Pardo, 2004). Schallert & Martin (2003), note that schema involves our long-term memory and when students are reading the text, title, and features their past experiences allow them to bring that information to their short-term memory and use it as they read (as cited in Pardo, 2004). Also, the more students read, the more words they know, and the more words they know, the easier it is to comprehend the text they are reading (Pardo, 2004). Reader’s comprehension also changes depending on the genre of the text. The type of text they are reading requires them to read for a specific purpose (Prado, 2004).

There are various strategies teachers can do to improve student’s comprehension during reading. One of them is implementing a balanced literacy framework. During read-alouds and guided reading teachers can ask students “high-level questions during and after” the reading (Stahl, 2016, p. 629). Strategic actions are also helpful ways to see students thinking that will guide teachers to assist students in understanding the text



(Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Burkins & Yaris (2016), share some pertinent information about the print and meaning which are crucial components to diving into students' reading process. The way that students process can be an indicator to how they comprehend. Readers who is relying too much on the print of the text, can have gaps in their understanding of the text. This reader can be the one who has excellent fluency, but is not thinking about the meaning of the text (Burkins & Yaris, 2016). On the other side of the pendulum, we have a reader who utilizes more of their meaning of the text without using the print to help them. Whether a student is a high reader, intermediate or a struggling reader it is crucial to consider their reading process. Our goal as educators is to ensure that readers are using both print and meaning to comprehend the text. To grow readers, we must provide them with instruction and a model of how reading looks like. This information helps us to know how the reader comprehends and fill in the gaps (Burkins & Yaris, 2016). We must not overlook the importance of writing about reading for comprehension. Writing before or after reading gives students an opportunity to “document their independent thinking” as well as “synthesizing information and figuring out how their thinking has changed after discussion” (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Writing about their reading varies depending on the genre of the text. This is not a lengthy assignment, it is meant to be a quick way for students to reflect on their learning. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Students require time to discuss, share, write, and connect about their thinking before, during, after, and reading (Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017).

## **Chapter III**

### **Method**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perspectives and use of reading strategies during their guided reading instruction in their first-grade bilingual classrooms. This chapter will discuss the researcher's basic qualitative study design was used to uncover the instructional strategies participants deemed effective with instruction in their bilingual classrooms (Merriam, 2009). Data was collected from field notes, observation notes, the journal of the researcher, and a series of interviews from three Latinx first-grade teachers in inner-city bilingual (Spanish/English) classrooms located in a major city of the southwestern United States.

#### **Research Questions**

What do bilingual teachers consider as effective practices for implementing guided reading instruction?

#### **Research Design**

Merriam (2009) describes a basic qualitative research study as having been derived philosophically from constructionism, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction and as being used by researchers who are interested in "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (p. 23). Ultimately, the purpose of educational qualitative research is to improve our practice and the basic qualitative research design is particularly well suited to obtain an in-depth understanding of effective educational

processes (S. B. Merriam, personal communication, September 5, 2013). For example, a basic qualitative study can be used to uncover strategies, techniques, and practices of highly effective teachers and administrators. Such insight is not possible with quantitative approaches. Phenomenological research is not used to examine processes. The qualitative data included researcher field and observation notes, researcher journal entries, and interview responses from a convenience sample of three bilingual teachers (Creswell, 2014). The teacher interviews were recorded and then transcribed to identify themes and instructional implications for the use of reading strategies. Interview data sets were analyzed using manual coding to determine themes related to literacy instructional strategies in bilingual classrooms. “Coding is the process of organizing and sorting data (“Tips & Tools,” n.d., p. 1).” Coding allows the researcher to interpret all of the information in a cohesive way to find commonalities and differences between multiple means of information. (“Tips & Tools,” n.d.).

### **Setting and Participants**

The study is being conducted on three Latin-X bilingual teachers who teach in three different urban schools in Houston, Texas. The sample size for the study is three bilingual teachers. This is a single and convenience purposeful sampling procedure due to the researcher choosing the participants based on their teaching experience. Table 1 shows the participant’s age groups, education and years teaching overall, and years teaching first grade bilingual. This study only examined these three teachers.

Table 1

*2019 Teacher Background Information*

Participants	Ethnicity	Age Range	Education	Years of teaching	Years teaching first grade bilingual
Teacher 1	Hispanic	55-64 years	Alternative certification program	19	18
Teacher 2	Hispanic	35-44 years	Education	12	8
Teacher 3	Hispanic	25-34 years	Education	2	2
Researcher	Hispanic	25-34	Education	5	2

### *Participants*

Teacher 1 studied and grew up in Mexico where the primary language is Spanish. He studied business administration with a specialization in marketing and finance. In 1989, he entered the Alternative Certification Program (ACP) provided by Region 4, where he completed one year at a university in the Houston area which allowed him to be certified to teach in Texas. He began his career in education in 2000, and for his eighteen years of teaching has remained at the same school teaching first-grade bilingual students.

Teacher 2 grew up in a home where both Spanish and English were spoken at home. At a young age, she entered school in a mainstream classroom where English was the primary language of instruction. Teacher 2 states, “I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher” (Teacher 1, personal communication, August 8, 2019). She graduated from a university in the Houston Area with a certification in bilingual education. She has spent twelve years educating bilingual students at the same campus. Eight of those years were spent teaching first grade bilingual.

Teacher 3 first language was Spanish and learned English through school. She attended a university in the Houston area in which she received her bachelors in bilingual education. She has been teaching first grade bilingual for two years on the same campus.

The researcher learned both Spanish and English at home. I was in a bilingual program until 5th grade, in which I was in all English classroom. Education was not my first choice. I spent a semester in music. Then I decided that was not my path, so I decided to enter education and have loved it ever since. I was a teacher's aide for four years. I then graduated with my bachelors in bilingual education. I taught two years mainstream first grade gifted and talented, one-year mainstream kindergarten, and two years first grade bilingual. I was also an instructional coach for two years focusing on kindergarten through third-grade English language arts, dual language, math, and science. I continued my love for education and received my masters in curriculum and instruction. This lead to my continuous learning and growth in the doctoral program.

## **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

### *Interview Development*

For the interviews, the research question guided the development of the questions. A set of grand tour questions were set, but through discussion, more questions emerged for clarity and more detail (Spradley, 1979). The interview protocol consisted of nine questions with two questions containing probes. The questions were asked specifically to allow participants to share their experiences and expertise in their classroom. The interview protocol was reviewed by two members of the committee for the final draft. Three bilingual teachers participated in the study because they fit the criteria of having taught first-grade bilingual. The following questions were asked;

- Tell me a little about your professional background and experience?
  - Share primary and secondary school experience
  - Undergraduate education
  - Teacher preparation- Traditional or ACP?
  - Years of teaching experience
  - Years teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade
  - Years at current school
  - Any other experience you would like to share?
- In your own words, define balanced literacy?
- What literacy strategies have you utilized in your classroom for student reading achievement?
- What strategies were successful? Not successful?
- In your own words describe guided reading?
- Are there any literacy strategies you wanted to utilize, but did not? What were they? Explain why you did not use?
- Anything else you would like to share?

Data was gathered through interviews with convenience sample of three bilingual teachers. These teachers have taught or are currently teaching first grade bilingual. One week prior to accepting to take part in the study, participants received an invitation letter and consent form via email. This explained the purpose of the study and also their role in the study if they choose to participate. If the interviewees had any concerns they were given the researcher's contact information. Two of the participants signed their consent form prior to conducting the interview. Approval was also required by the University of

Houston for the protection of human subjects prior to conducting interviews. Interviews were conducted in July 2019. Participants were asked what time, day, and where they wanted to conduct the interviews. Two interviews were conducted face-to-face and one was conducted via phone. Participants answered a set of questions concerning literacy strategies used in their first grade bilingual classroom. All of the interviews were recorded. Interviews lasted no more than an hour each. The researcher transcribed the audio into a word document. The questions were bolded and underlined to show that the researcher was asking a question. The responses from the participants were italicized and written under the question asked by the researcher. All data from the interviews are anonymous. Pseudonyms were coded for teachers and schools to protect their identity. After the transcriptions were complete, the researcher used the constant comparative method to analyze the data. The participant's responses were sent via email to for "member checking" and they were asked to verify the information to ensure that their responses were stated accurately and to ensure there were no errors or bias in their responses that they had not said (Grove, 1998). Findings were member checked with participants and peer-debriefed to check for accuracy and researcher bias.

Table 2

*Data Collection Plan*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>
What do bilingual teachers consider as effective practices for implementing guided reading instruction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Observational notes</li> <li>● Reflection journal</li> <li>● Interview Questions</li> <li>● Member-Checking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coding and Development of themes</li> <li>● Clarification or confirmation of responses</li> </ul>

## Sample Lesson Plan

To begin planning for my guided reading groups. I have to first assess my students using a reading assessment called *Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura 2 (ELD2+)* (1996). Once I have identified each student's independent reading level, I begin to divide them into groups with students who are on the same level. If I have too many students in one level, I analyze their data and group them based on their needs. I have groups of no more than 6 kids to a group, ideally I would want my groups to be no more than 4. It just depends on how many students I have on a reading level. I analyze the data and make notes on their strengths and areas of improvement. I use this information as a base to guide my guided reading session, but the more I get to know my students the more that this will change. I then choose a book on their instructional reading level. This is a book that is not too easy and not too hard, but provide students with enough challenge to apply their reading strategies. I use *Despegando hacia la lectura* (2019), (see *Appendix D*) books and lesson plan guide to gear my lesson, as well as some other things I focus on depending on the reading level of my group. The books provided in each bag have a literary and informational text that coincide together. I use one book for a couple of days and then I use the other for the next days. I begin with sight words, and if it is a group that needs support in letters, we work on letter name and sounds using plastic letters and an alphabet arch. I then choose a book, and present it to the students, I ask them if possible to read the title. I then ask them to tell me what do they think the book will be about or what do they think they will learn? If students have a difficult time, I talk to them about how the title and the pictures or photographs in the cover page can give me lots of information on the books topic. I then provide a brief introduction to the story and



tell them what question I will ask them at the end. For example, “I want you to pay attention to what the problem in the story is and how it is resolved?” As students read, I have a sheet of paper divided into fourths with the date, the level of the book and title. Beside each quadrant on the paper I write each student’s name. As students read, I listen in while their reading. I observe their reading behaviors, notice if they are using their reading strategies. If I notice a student has read a word incorrectly, I tell the student I noticed you said, *coma* and point to the word, they look at the word and quickly self-correct. I then asked how do you know it is *cama* instead of *coma* like you read, they could say something like, it has an *a*. I allow students to take ownership of their learning as advised by Irene Fountas, Gay Su Pinnell, Kim Yaris, and Jan Burkis. I recognize and praise them when they use one of their reading strategies or they are working on improving something we had discussed in previous guided reading lessons. Something I say is, *I like the way you self-corrected the mistake you made, that’s what good readers do as we read. I do it too.* Students need to hear their strengths are being noticed as well as improving their needs. Guided reading is a time to build confidence in kids who say they can’t read. I also ask them questions that ask them to talk about what their reading and share their thoughts about what their learning in that page or chapter. With my students not on grade level, I front load the vocabulary that will be in the text. I ask them if they know what the words mean and then we look at the picture for support. When reading with my on level or above readers, we talk about some ways that we can use context clues, background knowledge, and the picture to help us identify the meaning of an unknown word. I note all of this information in my observation sheet. Depending on the group, I may or may not have them write the question I posed at the beginning of the

lesson or we verbally discuss it. If time permits, we work on some word study pertaining to the week or student needs. Students are able to take the book and add it to their independent book box to reread during that time. At the end of the week, I self-reflect on the week's lessons and how I can be of better service to my students. If needed I create a mini anchor chart to support my students who have the same needs or if all students need support in say, re-reading to make meaning of the text. I model this during shared reading time. Everything I do in guided reading, I tie my reading comprehension and phonics.

### **Data Analysis**

To answer the research question: What do bilingual teachers consider as effective practices for implementing guided reading instruction? Three bilingual first-grade teachers were interviewed to share their expertise on what literacy strategies deemed successful for student reading achievement. A constant comparative method was used to analyze the qualitative data that consisted of interview responses and observations (Grove, 1998).

Before conducting interviews, consent was asked and approved by each participant. The interviews varied in length but did not exceed one hour. Interviews were recorded. The audio recording was then transcribed into a word document for each interview. A Microsoft Word document was created and coded teacher 1, 2, 3. These were also the file names for each interview to conceal identity. All documents were secured in researcher's personal laptop that is secured with a password.

Participant's responses were italicized and the interview questions were bolded and underlined. This just made the interviews organized and easier to read for coding.

Throughout the entire process, it is important to remember the goal of my study, this will help in creating labels to code my data as I am analyzing (“Tools & Tips,” n.d.). Once the data was transcribed I knew exactly what I was looking for. The main goal of the interviews was to answer the research question, Grove (1998), calls this stage 1: comparing incidents applicable to each category (p.274). I began reading the transcriptions and locating literacy strategies that the interviewees had in common. I was looking for crucial information that aligned to my research questions. Each theme or phrase was written on an index card, labeled and highlighted a different color on the transcription. Once, I had all of my themes with short phrases, I then created a “codebook” which had all of my codes in a single sheet was able to visibly see all my themes in one page and create a Microsoft word document with these themes as headings on the word document (“Tools & Tips,” n.d.).

### **Coding**

Manual coding was utilized for identifying emerging themes and organizing data. Using both the constant comparative method steps as well as Saldana (2209), coding cycle. A code could be a word, phrase, or sentences which evolve through repetitive patterns (Saldana, 2009). This manual coding was tedious, because the researcher used paper and pencil to analyze the data, but it allowed for true understating of each participants responses. Saldana (2009), suggests this type of manual coding as well as Groves (1998), which shares that writing codes in index cards helps the process. After this is complete, transfer the information to a word document. A Microsoft Word document was also utilized to insert participants responses and for easier visibility for coding. Coding into categories and recurring phrases allowed the researcher to place these into different categories. Table 4 below shows an in-depth process of the coding process.

Table 3

*Data Analysis Coding Process*

Analysis of Themes
Read transcriptions of interviews (one at a time).
Write words or phrases on index cards and highlight key words that are important to answer the research question.
Continue the process for each transcription.
Once, all of the phrases or words are found. Look at all of the index cards and words and decide on a common category for each. Set these as titles of the categories and the minimal words beneath. Notice any similarities and repeated words. Tab these on the transcriptions, to go back and reread and clarify.
If needed, re-code and simplify.

**Ethical Considerations**

To ensure that all ethical considerations have been considered approval was required from the International review board. Participants received a notification letter and consent form via email informing them of the study prior to conducting interviews. The steps that will be taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence are that at the end of the interview, participants responses will be transcribed and shown to the participants to ensure that what they said is the same as the transcription. Participants name and school will have pseudonyms. Actual names will not be identified. Consent will be kept in a personal electronic file. The data was kept secure in an encrypted laptop from the researcher.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Findings and Discussion**

This chapter shares the qualitative findings of the interviews and the discussion of the results. This study explores teachers' perspectives about the use of guided reading in their first-grade bilingual classrooms. This study included three first-grade bilingual classrooms who have taught in a first-grade bilingual classroom located in a major city of the southwestern United States. The interview questions are as follows:

- Tell me a little about your professional background and experience?
  - Share primary and secondary school experience
  - Undergraduate education
  - Teacher preparation- Traditional or ACP?
  - Years of teaching experience
  - Years teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade
  - Years at current school
  - Any other experience you would like to share?
- In your own words, define balanced literacy?
- What literacy strategies have you utilized in your classroom for student reading achievement?
- What strategies were successful? Not successful?
- In your own words describe guided reading?
- Are there any literacy strategies you wanted to utilize, but did not? What were they? Explain why you did not use?
- Anything else you would like to share?

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the themes found in the interview responses according to the literacy strategies used in first-grade bilingual classrooms. The researcher shares some insight on the findings of the themes. Then shares participant's responses to the interview questions according to the themes.

## Themes

Table 4

*Table of Recurring Themes*

Word	# Times Used
Balanced Literacy	4
Guided Reading/Small Group	15
Leveled Books/Readers	19
Fluency	20
Critical Thinking (Comprehension)	60
Parental Involvement	11

## Theme One: Balanced Reading

*How children feel about school and about themselves in the early years can set the stage for their future success in school and in life (Willows, 2008, p. 20).*

Balanced reading or literacy is a framework that encompasses all components of a reading program. Teachers were asked to share in their own words, what is balanced reading to them? They share their responses below.

Teacher 1 says:

Balanced literacy for me, is how to improve reading and all of the reading strategies and writing because reading and writing go together, they cannot be separated. They have to better one, to better the other. They have to be worked at the same time.

Teacher 2 mentions:

Balanced literacy to me is a combination of shared reading, interactive reading, and exposing students to a variety of literacy materials so they can be successful. Reading and comprehending and also including writing because once they are able to write it that is on another level. Once they are able to explain and put it on paper that's another part of balanced literacy.

Teacher 3 replies:

Balanced literacy is a combination of guided reading, read aloud, shared reading, and individual reading. Students need a little of everything. So when I read to them, when we have our small groups, and they read by themselves.

Researcher shares:

Balanced literacy is a form of reading instruction that ensures that students are receiving various opportunities to practice reading and writing in the classroom. They are given modeling by the teacher, time to work together in guided activities, and time to practice independently. Students are exposed to read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and guided, independent, and shared writing.

### **Discussion of Theme One: Balanced Reading**

Teachers note that balanced reading incorporates many literacy strategies including writing. Balanced reading gives students plenty of opportunities to practice reading and writing in many situations. Writing and reading are not separate, but together

they help students become better readers and writers. As teacher 3 mentioned, balanced literacy is a combination of guided reading, read aloud, shared reading, and individual reading. Teachers shared the importance of implementing reading during reading instruction. Teachers are knowledgeable about what balanced reading is.

### **Theme Two: Guided Reading**

*Guided reading takes place in the classroom, and that is where students live a literate life in schools (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p.9).*

Guided reading is a literacy strategy intended to individualize instruction for students of similar needs in a smaller group setting. Teachers were asked to define what guided reading meant to them.

Teacher 1 said:

Guided reading is working with a group of 4 students. Where we begin to look at fluency, they begin to read, ask them comprehension questions, teach them parts of a book. Depending on how the school year is progressing the questioning becomes more focused, defined. They begin to understand the reading and they begin to increase their fluency. I make the group with students of the same level why? Because if they are low, we are focusing on the alphabet arch, letters, sounds, syllables. The medium group needs more practice, the high group begins to answer more comprehension questions, different questions, and they get better.

Teacher 2 shared:

I try to have 4-5 kids per group depending on the number of kids and I try to see them every day if possible. That's what I like. If they master reading they will be successful in anything. So, sometimes I do go over my time, but for me, it is worth it and



if it takes time from another subject we will make up for it because reading is so crucial, especially in first grade.

Teacher 3 stated:

Guided reading to me is differentiation and reading levels for my students. That's the time I have to see where they're struggling and what's where we can actually target their deficiencies. Guided reading is one of my favorite parts of the day. I like to have them in small groups. I get to hear them read.

Researcher mentioned:

Guided reading is a form of small group instruction that allows the teacher to gather students with similar needs in an area to focus on students' needs and strengths geared towards reading. During this time I work with a group of no more than 5 students in the same reading level and listen to them read books of various genres. I focus on reading comprehension which, aligns to the reading TEKS I am teaching for that week. I also focus on fluency, prosody, and decoding skills. Depending on the students, I also work on letter name and letter sounds. Each group varies in levels. Each group requires different reading strategies. I also, take observation notes as I am listening to my students read. I take notes on notebook paper of each student. I listen to each student read and write a plus sign for strategies they are doing great and a minus sign for areas of improvement. This allows me to reinforce the good reading behaviors and reteach and model the areas of improvement. I take note on their miscues. Are they structural, visual, or meaning? This allows me to target those areas and teach students strategies to use that they can take with them during independent reading. Some of the strategies are rereading, self-correcting and asking themselves questions about their reading. Guided reading

allows me to have my students in a small setting and truly get to see how they are growing as readers.

### **Discussion of Theme Two: Guided Reading**

Teachers shared that guided reading is a time that allows them to have students with similar needs or as Teacher 2 noted, “I normally try to have a high, medium, low,” and provide support. As Teacher 3 stated, it’s her “favorite part of the day”. During this time, teachers are able to meet with various groups and have conversations about the text and how they are growing as readers. It is a time to listen and model for students what good readers do. Each group requires different support from the teacher. As Teacher 1 discussed, during guided reading the teacher is providing a very structured lesson to each group, focused on their needs and strengths. It is during this time that teachers are able to meet students at their level and push the rigor to challenge their thinking without being in a large setting.

### **Theme Three: Read Alouds**

*It is important to consider the quality of books selected for read-aloud activities. Books that are well written, books with engaging characters and plots, and books that offer the teacher many opportunities to model fluent and expressive reading are the best choices. Including an assortment of text genres exposes children to more literacy variety. Teachers should consider the instructional goals of the read-aloud when selecting books (Lane & Wright, 2007, p.669).*

Teachers were asked to share what literacy strategies they use for student reading achievement. One of the literacy strategies teachers shared was read-alouds. Below teachers share what they do during read-alouds.

Teacher 1 responded:

When I do a read aloud, I read with them. I think aloud to show them how they have to think, what they need to think when they are reading a book. I teach them to look at the pictures, not just read. First-grade books have a lot of drawings, look at the pictures because sometimes the pictures says more. Before reading a book, first we look at the pictures and then they tell me what is happening in the story. Why? Because that way they can notice that the pictures can tell you sometimes more than the words or sentences that are written. This gives them a better understanding of what they are reading. And also give them a lot of questions. Why this, why that. Because I am interested in knowing how they think, what are they thinking, even if it is right or wrong, I can know how to help them. If I do not know how they think, then I cannot help them.

Teacher 2 said:

Read-alouds we do a lot and interactive reading. Those are the ones we do a lot. I like to choose a book for the week. Have a certain skill and I model 3 times how they are supposed to be thinking then I have them think-pair-share. Turn to your partner. My kids will always know at the beginning what is expected. So if the skill is character analysis, by the end of the story you should be able to tell me how Melissa's mood changed throughout the story. What were the causes that led to that change? You have to be prepared. I like to know where I'm going to stop. I will have a little sticky note where I'm going to be stopping, where I'm going to ask questions and at that point, it looks funny maybe to us how you're thinking aloud, but for them, they need that. I'll stop and I will be like, Wow, so at first she was upset but now that she saw that her dad is going on another date now that her mom has passed away, I can only imagine that it would cause

me sadness. So I can understand why she is locked up in her room and doesn't want to talk to her dad. Then I continue reading and I'll stop at another point or another important part and then model another question that I'll be asking for that specific skill. I am showing them how it should look. And then sentence stems work a lot for them. Melissa changed because blank. Especially at that age it helps them a lot. Really in other grades.

Teacher 3 noted:

For the read-aloud we base it off of the TEKS for that week. Sometimes we teach multiple things in one TEKS. So for example, with an informational book I try to incorporate social studies and science. These books are usually not on their level. I am reading to them and I usually stop and ask them questions. I usually have a sentence stem for them to either answer. I have my question on a sentence stem and a prompt so that they can turn and talk to their partner. I try to do higher-order thinking questions. We do think alouds and I stop and do a chart depending on the topic. For example, if it is plot or something I try and do an anchor chart. Hey, let's stop and think of this. What's the problem, the main idea, and I write it down on the anchor chart. Usually, before we start I read the objective and discuss the main vocabulary words that are on the objective. Going over the vocabulary, I think that's really important. In between the story, I ask questions like, how. After the read alouds we use sticky notes and they write their thinking and place it on the chart. Sometimes our read aloud lasts two days so they would write what happened at the beginning of the story.

Researcher discussed:

There are many literacy strategies I utilize in my classroom for student reading achievement. One is a read aloud. The first thing in conducting a read aloud for me is

knowing what the focus is for the week. I look at the reading TEKS that I am focusing on. Then I choose a book that leans itself to teaching the skill. I pre plan questions that I am going to use to teach the skill. I think of questions that are going to require students to think beyond the text. I also think about where and how I am going to model my thinking. To me, this is a key factor in student's comprehension. Students at this age require lots of modeling on how to think about the text. Students have the ability to, they just need to be taught how to. Another strategy I use that I think has benefitted my students is making connections within the text. I model how this looks and what exactly it means to make connections with the text. Students come with so much schema which helps with comprehension. Another strategy is writing about the text. Students connect their reading to writing. They write about what the skill is. It could be that they answer the question. This connects to writing. Students learn that writing and reading are not separated, but when you read at a higher level, I notice my students also write at a higher level or you know what they are capable of.

### **Discussion of Theme Three: Read-Aloud**

Teachers are spending time reading to students aloud and modeling their thinking. Teachers are choosing books that match the reading skill. These texts are authentic and meaningful. Teachers shared that they are also asking prominent questions to support student's comprehension. These questions are how and why questions as Teacher 3 noted. These questions go beyond a simple yes and no response. This type of questioning allows teachers to get more information from students in order to understand what is happening in the story. Read-alouds allows students to see how thinking about reading looks like by their teacher. How reading looks and sounds like. They are also having

discussions with the teacher and their peers about the text. It is through these conversations about the text, that allows students to understand the text whether it is an informational or literary text.

#### **Theme Four: Fluency**

*Reading fluency is made up of two distinct components at two ends of the reading spectrum-automaticity in word recognition and expression in oral reading that reflects the meaning of the text (Rasinski, 2014, p.4).*

This theme was one that many teachers mentioned along with comprehension. Teachers noted student's fluency as a factor in reading success, but not the goal of reading. Fluency allows the teacher to note student's rate, accuracy, expression and prosody while reading.

Teacher 1 said:

I have them read. To try and read the book as fast as possible. When we are in guided reading, they read the same book, so that they know what they are reading about, we also have AR. They read library books that are different. They have to read the book and answer questions on the computer. These books are on their level. They are reinforcing reading, fluency, and comprehension with the questions. If they receive a 60 or below they have to reread the book three times and retake the test. Also, increasing the level of the book. Little by little. If they are doing well, they continue to move up the ladder, step by step.

Teacher 2 explained:

So for fluency, sight words. I make it a game. Let's see how many you can do. Let's see who can get the most. I like using the Codi Freeman, boom. They enjoy it a lot.

Kids will do anything for a sticker, a candy, or pencil. Especially at that age. Sometimes for fluency, give them a book that is not on their level, a lower level and have them reread and reread it, yes it's too easy, but you are going to be able to master the fluency. For my low group instead of sight words, syllables. Cubes with syllables and roll it and say it even if it is a made-up word.

Teacher 3 noted:

I would stop them when they are getting stuck in the words, stop and think about what you're reading. I would get a little index card and let them clap the syllables and then write it down. With our guided reading story we read it for two days and the next day I would show them those words.

Researcher said:

To increase my student's fluency or rate I would do shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. During these times I modeled reading fluently, I showed students what it should sound like and what it shouldn't. We discuss why it is important to read at a good rate. Most importantly I share with students that it is not about reading super-fast, it is about reading like we're talking. We raise our voice, our voice changes, we pause, etc. Modeling all of this is key for students. They need to see it every day. During shared reading, I choose a book on student's current reading level from a site called Reading A-Z. I project the book on my interactive panel. I read, we read, and they read. I model and I also make mistakes and correct them. I make a note of the error and tell students that good readers make mistakes, but good readers also learn how to fix those errors. These skills are taken with them to independent reading and guided reading. Repeated reading of the same text is also crucial. Some might say they are memorizing

the words, but students are becoming familiar with the book and recognizing the words quickly because they have read the book multiple times. This is a continuous model. When students show growth, I make sure to note that. I am open to students about their reading and focus on what they can improve.

### **Discussion of Theme Four: Fluency**

Teachers expressed the importance of fluency in first-grade bilingual classrooms. Students are reading books on their level and below their level to build their fluency. Rereading the same text allows students to increase their word knowledge, therefore they are able to recognize words accurately and faster. Sight words and syllables is one strategy that helps students build fluency, especially students who require more support. Teachers also have some misconceptions about fluency. Teacher 1 mentioned, “To try and read the book as fast as possible.” But as research shows, a fluent reader has good rate, accuracy, prosody, and intonation. Rate, is not the sole purpose of fluency and this seemed to be shared by some participants. The good thing is that fluency is being monitored and increased during guided reading.

### **Theme Five: Comprehension**

*Comprehension inherently involves inferential and evaluative thinking, not just literal reproduction of the author’s words (Fielding & Pearson, 1994, p. 62).*

Through discussion with teachers, this theme emerged during read-alouds. Teachers mentioned how during that time they asked students questions. Teachers shared that through questioning, they can get an insight into their understanding of the text. Teacher 1 said:



And with questions of why and why. Why this, why that, why do you think that they will increase their comprehension. Comprehension goes with questions. Who is the character, what is the setting, how can they resolve the problem? Reinforcing what we do in class and they have to write the answers. It is not just a yes or no response. They have to write in a complete sentence.

Teacher 2 mentions:

Now for our district provides us with questions for each skill. So I just choose the ones that go with the book or I try using a variety in either my shared reading, interactive reading or even guided reading so we can try to see the different questions. They are not yes or no. They have to recall what they're reading, make some type of connection. They have to show understanding of what they're reading.

Teacher 3 said:

It is important to hear them read fluently but the most important thing to me was the comprehension. Even though he was reading slow, but did he comprehend, did he know what he was reading. That's when the questioning came in. What's the problem, what's the main idea?

Researcher shares:

Comprehension equals understanding. When a child reads they could be thinking about what they're reading or reading without understanding. Every child is reading at a different level and this means that the structure of their text varies. This also means the comprehension of the text varies according to the text during guided reading. The comprehension questions for a student that read a level A book which is only a two or three letter sentence will differ from a student who reads a level 6, which has more words

and a plot to the story. Now, during a read aloud the book tends to be a little difficult, but students are given a purpose for reading and what they will be looking for as I read. During this read aloud time, I model how I am understanding the text. I model my thinking process. I allow students time to think as well and discuss this with a partner. Students also respond to the question in written form. Students make text to text connections, text to self, and text to world. Before students can accomplish this, I model a lot. I also create anchor charts to allow students to have a visual and be able to refer back to it.

### **Discussion of Theme Five: Comprehension**

Teachers ask students questions that go beyond the simple yes or no response. Teachers are asking their students questions that reflect a deeper understanding of the text. These questions allow students to dig deeper into what the text is trying to convey to them as a reader. Questions of “why” allow students to comprehend what they are reading, this could be the purpose of reading to the reader or purpose of the author. Participants also shared that they are asking students to make connections to the text as they read. Asking them questions that allow them to see themselves in books and relate to them, this helps them get a better understanding of what the author is trying to say.

### **Theme Six: Parent Involvement**

*Children’s word-reading accuracy and fluency (i.e., decoding) is linked to aspects of the family environment that children grow up in, including parents’ educational attainment, how often parents read themselves and to their children, and availability of reading material (as cited in Bergen, Zuijen, Bishop, & Jong, 2016, p. 147).*

Teachers mentioned how parent involvement in their students reading at home was an indicator of student reading achievement. They not only received support from parents at school, but they also were engaged with their children's reading at home by listening and reading to and with them.

Teacher 1 mentioned:

Everything here is practice. Practice, practice, practice. The keyword like I've told parents for 19 years, is practice. There are no miracles, no magic. The magic is practice. The more that students practice. Reading at home, the support at home from the parents. I always involve parents so that they can read. We have A. R (Accelerated Reading Program) and Raz-Kids, and they have books to read at home. I send them books. I ask parents to allow them to read in their tablets at home instead of playing. The more they practice, the better they get. In Raz there are questions, so when they log on they read the book and it asks them questions. I also send them books every week in a bag and Thursday, I send them some questions about that book, for homework, that they have to answer. Who is the character, what is the setting, how can they resolve the problem? Reinforcing what we do in class. And they have to write the answers. It is not just a yes and no response they have to write in a complete sentence.

Teacher 2 explained:

First of all, you have to build relationships with these parents. Let them know that your heart is in and you do have the best interest in their kids. And let them know the facts. Let them know the importance of them being on level before they leave your classroom. Ways that I would hold my parents accountable is my kids were always taking books home. From the first week of school and something as simple as what was

your favorite part. Child had to answer and the parent. The questions were written. It was something small. They had to put something so that I know they either sat there and listened to the kid or something. Your kid is seeing you read and they see that it is important. It's a team. And especially in the lower grades, parents are more involved, they are able to help them. Parent support is number one. Because we are both held accountable. It's not just on you, your parents know hey this is us. I can't do it all alone in the hour that I have for my reading block. They need to take partnership of it. That makes a great deal in the students' reading success.

Teacher 3 shared:

I have a universal page where they have questions and they have to write about it. I also try to involve the parents. I try to make the parents and students accountable for what I'm sending home. I would give them an incentive to return it. It was a question per day even if it is a different book but at least as they answered the question for the day. Most of these questions are open-ended. I have an informational and fiction. But usually, the books they take home are informational. Who are the characters, what happened at the beginning, middle and end, what do you think was the problem?

Researcher noted:

Students took home a book that was at their instructional level for homework. They also took a reading log page for homework with questions varied depending on the skill I was teaching, the genre, and sometimes the level of the book. They had an informational log which asked students to write an important detail they learned, write a connection to the story, what text features they found, and something new they learned. The literary genre questions would ask for character, setting, retell the story, problem and

solution, favorite part, and make a connection to the text. The goal for parents is to read with their students for about 20 minutes if possible. I share with parents the importance of reading at home. I remind students that they can read with, to, and listen to their kids read. It should be fun.

### **Discussion of Theme Six: Parent Involvement**

Teachers shared that it is crucial to involve parents in their child's reading achievement. Parents are involved in their child's reading by either reading with them or listening to them read, but they are also accountable for ensuring their children are reading at home. Students are answering comprehension questions in written form through a reader's response or reading log. They are receiving different genres of books as well. Students are exposed to a variety of genres and are also exposed to questions pertaining to each genre. Parents are an essential component of reading achievement. They are connecting the bridge from school and home. A child's first encounter with print is from their parents. The more exposure they have, the more connections they will have, therefore strengthening their comprehension (Stahl, 2016). Parents reading to their child at home has many benefits. For example, students are given opportunities to have a higher level of knowledge. This can lead to success in the later years academically. Parents are the first people to instill a love of literacy at home. Parents are pertinent in children's reading success.

### **Theme Seven: Independent Reading**

*Support students in their reading and convey the message, through your actions, that independent reading time is highly valued (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p. 318).*

Independent reading is another literacy strategy in which students are reading for a prolonged period of time. During this time students are reading books of interest and teachers hold students accountable for their reading by either asking or answering questions about the book. Teachers also use this time to confer with students and ensure that students are implementing their reading strategies.

Teacher 1: (did not mention independent reading)

Teacher 2 said:

Normally I try to give them 15 minutes when they come in just go get a book. Sometimes if we can't have recess, let's get a book and read for fun. I let them choose a book that they want because sometimes we force them to read on their level, but there might be other books that they want and it's okay because it helps with fluency. So if this child is on a level 16 and he wants a level 8, its okay that's just going to help with their fluency and their comprehension. If they can read it and they might be able to comprehend it better if you ask them a question about it.

Teacher 3 mentioned:

I have two times where they can read by themselves. During centers and 5 minutes at the beginning of the day. Like when they finish their work or their warm-up easily I let them read and be accountable for what they read in their journal they just write about what they read. And when it is in their centers they are reading with either a partner or individually. They read to themselves and they do like a beginning, middle, and end graphic organizer and they write about what they read about. When they do independent reading their doing it by genre, my library is set up by genre. They might not be reading on their level but they get to have free choice of what they read.

Researcher shared:

For independent reading, my students read about 10-15 minutes. They had a book bag with four books. They had their guided reading book which was at an instructional level, they had another book that was on their level, and they had two books that they choose for fun. During this time students could choose where they wanted to read. They also could read with a buddy or by themselves. I would walk around and listen to students read. I would ask them questions about what they were reading. Students were allowed to change their fun books once or twice a week. What I noticed was that students kept the same books of interest. They enjoyed rereading the same text and being able to read it effortlessly. This time gave students ownership of their reading. They could choose where, what, and how to read.

### **Discussion of Theme Seven: Independent Reading**

Students are given a specific time frame to read independently. This can last from 15 to 20 minutes depending on the teacher. During this time, students are reading books that are of interest, below, on, or above level and are engaging. Students can have a book bag, book box, or any type of storage that allows them to keep their books and be in hands reach to read at any time of the day. Independent reading allows students to practice what they have learned in class and apply it by themselves.

In conclusion, these findings show that teachers are integrating guided reading as an integral component of their balanced literacy for student reading achievement. Teachers agree that it is a mixture of all components which provide students with various opportunities to succeed in reading. Not one is proven more effective than the other. Students are practicing reading skills which are modeled by the teacher and enforced

during shared, independent, and guided reading. They have also shared that reading success does not stop in the classroom, it continues at home.



## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

#### **Introduction**

Promising Practices: Teacher Perspectives on Successful Reading Strategies Evidenced in First Grade Bilingual Classrooms has shown us that teachers are implementing balanced literacy components in their classroom for student reading achievement. There is much to be learned about the time spent on each of the components. Research has been conducted on teachers balanced literacy perspectives, but not so much specifically bilingual first-grade teachers. This study gives insight on the reading strategies that teachers feel have proven to achieve reading success in their students.

Some items to consider for future research from this study can help to strengthen the correlation of the teachers' responses to the interview protocol. Incorporating the individual teachers reading scores from their students can help us understand and reflect on our students' reading growth and whether or not some students met the end of year growth or they remained the same. This will add more insight as to why some students did not reach their reading target at the end of the year. Other studies can hope to answer this question, does the teachers understanding of a balanced literacy and implementation of reading strategies have an impact on students' reading success? Through this research we were able to notice some similarities and differences between each teacher. It also gave us some insight into their understanding of balanced literacy and how their instruction looks like.

Summing up the findings, has shown great promise to teachers and their reading instruction. Teachers are supporting students. They are providing an array of reading strategies for their students' reading success. There is still much to learn and improve, it is through teacher reflections and growth can teachers provide students with excellent reading instruction.

## **Overview of the Study**

This qualitative case study was conducted in an urban area to explore teachers' perspectives and use of reading strategies in their first-grade bilingual classrooms. This study gives an overview of the various components of balanced literacy and reading strategies. The researcher's goal was to share what first grade bilingual teachers like herself are implementing in their classroom that show student reading success. The analysis of the qualitative data state the following conclusions:

1. Teachers are implementing some components of balanced literacy in their first-grade bilingual classrooms. Teachers mentioned that guided reading and read-alouds is where they focus on questioning and modeling reading strategies that are pertinent for students reading success.
2. Teachers are cognizant that comprehension is key for students' reading success. Teachers alike mentioned that questioning helps with comprehension. It is through questioning, think alouds, independent reading, guided reading, shared reading, read-alouds, and reading at home that strengthens comprehension.
3. Guided reading is one component of balanced literacy in which teachers are differentiating learning for students based on their reading level. Teachers are

working with students of similar needs and focusing on their needs which can be, but not limited to; decoding, fluency, comprehension, and reading strategies.

4. Parent involvement in students' reading success is evident in all teachers' classrooms. Reading solely at school is not the only way. Encouraging parents to work with students at home with reading is of utter importance to all of the teachers that participated in this study.

### **Items to Consider for Future Research**

As a first-grade bilingual teacher in an urban classroom, I have reflected on my teachings and thought to myself, what are the reading strategies that are helping my students become successful readers? I asked myself this same question. Similar to the participants, I also feel that all of the components expressed by teachers are key to students' reading success. Not one component will work in isolation, they work together. Neither is one component better than the other. Each component has its purpose and should be strategically implemented in the reading block and effectively used.

Future research can include students' quantitative data from students reading assessment. Teachers mentioned DRA (diagnostic reading assessment) which is a form of reading assessment, but future research can use whichever reading assessment is being used on their campus. The data could be from the beginning and the end of the school year. Readers can notice students reading levels grow. This information could answer questions about why teachers think some students excelled than others. Also, what instructional strategies were done with each of the students? Teachers can use students' data to explain how some

students achieved higher reading levels than others. This information can be useful to all teachers, who also ask themselves the same question.

If this study were to be replicated, more teacher participants would be included. A variety of teachers with varying years of teaching experience and undergraduate studies should be included. First year teachers as well as veteran teachers could give various insights to this research. Researchers could ask teachers to reflect on their instruction over a longer time frame. This will give better insight into exactly what and how the literacy strategies are being taught.

Further research can indicate the amount of time allocated for each component of balanced literacy. Also, it can help to know how often teachers are teaching. This will give a better indication if teachers are teaching a specific component more often and if so, this could be an indication of students' reading success.

Research is very limited on Spanish bilingual students. Not much research has been conducted on implementation of balanced literacy or reading specifically with bilingual students. This demographic is growing in schools. In order to provide the best education for these students, research should be conducted on how these students learn. Further research should consider incorporating the Spanish speaking demographics. This demographic would assist educators in assisting these students effectively.

If this study is duplicated, researchers can include these questions to non-bilingual teachers, grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. Balanced literacy is not solely implemented in the earlier grades, this is a crucial framework that

works for all students. It is also interesting to note if balanced literacy is implemented beyond the primary grades.

## **Recommendations**

This study sought to reflect on first-grade bilingual teachers reading strategies in their classrooms. There were a series of questions that leaned itself to discussing other matters, allowed teachers the flexibility to share their experiences in their own classroom with reading. As the researcher desegregated the data of each of the participants' responses, the researcher identified common themes between all of the participants' responses. The recommendations are based on the embedded themes of the participant's reflective responses. It is through these recommendations that educators can grow in their own learning and classroom instruction.

1. Participants' background information provided years of teaching experience. This information combined with the interview data showed that teachers who have taught less years were more knowledgeable on the terminology of balanced literacy and its components. This information can be helpful to administrators and district literacy departments and provide a refresher professional development on what is balanced literacy and the purpose of each component in the reading block.
2. Vocabulary is an aspect of reading comprehension that only one teacher mentioned. "Vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas and communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts" (Sedita, 2005, p. 33). Teachers should ask themselves if they are thinking about vocabulary when planning their reading instruction. Students should know word knowledge in

order to comprehend a text, if not this can lead to trouble comprehending while reading (Sedita, 2005). Professional development for educators should be geared to teaching students vocabulary strategies both directly and indirectly (Sedita, 2005). Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash (2003) share that students should at times be directly exposed to new vocabulary prior to teaching, but should also indirectly be taught by exposing them to new words through reading and appreciation in using the words (as cited in Sedita, 2005).

3. As teachers share, it is through a combination of various reading strategies that students are given the opportunity to become successful readers. It is repetitive, it is constant, and strategic. Teachers should ensure that read-alouds allow students to listen and converse with students in a close area. Teachers should include all of the components of balanced literacy for student reading achievement.
4. Comprehension is one aspect of reading that teachers mentioned as a priority throughout the interview. They mentioned that questioning students is an important factor in identifying if students comprehend the text, but questioning isn't the only way to assess comprehension. Teacher preparation programs and professional development should provide teachers with various strategies for assessing comprehension.
5. The participants had a strong understanding of what guided reading is and what they are doing in guided reading. One thing I would recommend to teachers is to ensure that they are transferring the information taught in guided reading to whole group and the information in whole group to guided reading. This can be accomplished during shared reading or read-alouds.

6. Administrator could suggest teachers to have a self-reflection journal. At the end of each day, teachers reflect on what went wrong, what went right, what will they change, or add. Similar to the researcher's journal, teachers will reflect on their teachings and observations of their students' needs and strengths during the components of balanced literacy. Apart from assessing our students, as teachers we should also assess ourselves. It can be as simple as one journal entry a week dictating highs and lows of the weeks regarding reading lessons, strategies, etc.

## **Conclusions**

Through this study, we can continue to explore the reflective practice of teachers' literacy strategies. It is through a reflection of our own teaching that we can grow and learn as educators. Understanding the methods that teachers use for student reading success is beneficial for all teachers. Diving into teachers' perspectives of what they believe is successful in their classroom can lead to further studies on newer and innovative practices. Teachers' can provide insight on what works and what doesn't. The researcher wanted to learn about what other teachers like herself, find successful for improvement of their students' reading. It was a reflective piece which allowed the participants an open forum to discuss and share their insights.

The researcher does not promise success on these recommendations, neither does the researcher ensure that if they are implemented students reading will increase. There are many factors to consider when making sure that students are reading on level at the end of the school year. However, this study does give promising practices to implement in the classroom.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Participation Information**



**Recruitment email**

July 2019

Dear fellow educator friends,

You are being asked to be part of a research study. The purpose of this research is to help identify implementation of reading strategies used in a first grade bilingual classroom. Reading is an essential part of being successful in school, which in turn leads to success in all aspects of life. You have been chosen to be a part in this interview because you have taught in a first grade bilingual classroom or are currently teaching in a first grade bilingual classroom. The study will be conducted via Zoom, phone, or in person at the interviewee's home. The data obtained from this study will not only help educators but will also help you as an educator on what you can do to help build your students reading achievement in school.

Being a part of this interview is entirely voluntary. This interview will take no more than 2 hours to complete and all of your responses will be kept completely confidential. No obvious undue risks will be endured and you may stop your participation at any time.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and your willingness to participate in this study is implied if you proceed with being interviewed. Attached to this form you will find the consent form stating you will be a part of the interview.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at [gina42207@yahoo.com](mailto:gina42207@yahoo.com) or 832-504-7582. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Gerardina Torres M.S

Galena Park ISD

**Text Message**

Hey,

I am currently working on my doctorates at UH and I am looking to interview first grade bilingual teachers on their perception on balanced literacy. Would you be interested in helping me?

**Appendix B**  
**Informed Consent**

## Informed Consent Form

**Title of research study: Reading Strategies used in a First Grade Bilingual Classroom**

Investigator: Gerardina Torres

### **Key Information:**

**The following focused information is being presented to assist you in understanding the key elements of this study, as well as the basic reasons why you may or may not wish to consider taking part. This section is only a summary; more detailed information, including how to contact the research team for additional information or questions, follows within the remainder of this document under the “Detailed Information” heading.**

### **What should I know about a research study?**

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Taking part in the research is voluntary; whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide, and can ask questions at any time during the study.

We invite you to take part in a research study about reading achievement strategies in a first grade bilingual classroom because you meet the following criteria of a first grade bilingual teacher.

In general, your participation in the research involves teaching reading in Spanish to first graders. The primary risk to you in taking part is *that there are no known risks which you can compare to the possible benefit of reading achievement.*

### **Detailed Information:**

The following is more detailed information about this study, in addition to the information listed above.

**Why is this research being done?**

**Reading is an essential part of being successful in school, which in turn leads to success in all aspects of life. Reading is necessary to understand all content areas.**

**Critical thinking, the creation of meaning with text and understanding are necessary skills to analyze the text and the world around it. The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of reading strategies to improve student reading performance in first grade bilingual classrooms.**

**How long will the research last?**

**We expect that you will be in this research study for approximately one day for no more than 2 hours.**

**How many people will be studied?**

*We expect to enroll about 3-5 people in this research study.*

**What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?**

- *The subject will interact with the investigator.*
- *The research will be done through Zoom or at the participant's home.*
- *The research will be done August 2019*
- *The research will last for one day and be no more than 2 hours.*
- *Participants will be asked to answer some questions regarding reading instruction.*

**What happens if I do not want to be in this research?**

You can choose not to take part in the research and it will not be held against you. Choosing not to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your alternative to taking part in this research study is not to take part.

**What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?**

You can withdraw your permission and leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

If you withdraw your permission, already collected data that still includes your name or other personal information will be removed from the study record.

**Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?**

*We do not expect any risks related to the research activities.*

**Will being in this study help me in any way?**

There are no known benefits to you from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits to others include insight on how to support first-grade bilingual students with reading achievement.

**What happens to the information collected for the research?**

**Your taking part in this project is anonymous, and information you provide cannot be linked to your identity.**

**Who can I talk to?**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, you should talk to the researcher, Gerardina Torres at [gtorres@uh.edu](mailto:gtorres@uh.edu), or 832-504-7582

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also talk to them at (713) 743-9204 or [cphs@central.uh.edu](mailto:cphs@central.uh.edu) if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
  - You cannot reach the research team.
  - You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
  - You have questions about your child's rights as a research subject.
  - You want to get information or provide input about this research.

**May we contact you regarding future research opportunities?**

*In the future, our research team may be interested in contacting you for other research studies we undertake, or to conduct a follow-up study to this one. There is never any obligation to take part in additional research. Do we have permission to contact you to provide additional information?*

€ Yes

€ No

## Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this research.

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Signature of subject

---

Date

---

Printed name of subject

---

Signature of person obtaining consent

---

Date

---

Printed name of person obtaining consent



# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH  
Institutional Review Boards

## APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

August 5, 2019

Gerardina Torres

gmtorres@uh.edu

Dear Gerardina Torres:

On July 30, 2019, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Successful Reading Strategies Evidenced in First Grade Bilingual Classrooms
Investigator:	Gerardina Torres
IRB ID:	STUDY00001691
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRP-502a_adult consent.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Text Message_Text.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Invitation letter_update.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• HRP-503 Protocol Template July_update.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• Interview Questions Protocol.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.);</li> </ul>
Review Category:	Exempt
Committee Name:	Not Applicable
IRB Coordinator:	<a href="#">Danielle Griffin</a>

The IRB approved the study on July 30, 2019 ; recruitment and procedures detailed within the approved protocol may now be initiated.

As this study was approved under an exempt or expedited process, recently revised regulatory requirements do not require the submission of annual continuing review

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Question**

**Researcher:** Gerardina Torres

**Research Title:** Reading Strategies Used in a First Grade Bilingual Classroom

**Research Question:** Does guided reading improve students reading achievement?

**Interview Questions:**

- Tell me a little about your professional background and experience?
  - Share primary and secondary school experience
  - Undergraduate education
  - Teacher preparation- Traditional or ACP?
  - Years of teaching experience
  - Years teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade
  - Years at current school
  - Anything else about experience you would like to share?
- In your own words, define balanced literacy?
- What literacy strategies have you utilized in your classroom for student reading achievement?
- What strategies were successful? Not successful?
- In your own words describe guided reading?
- Are there any literacy strategies you wanted to utilize, but did not? What were they? Explain why you did not use?
- Anything else you would like to share?

**Appendix D**  
**Lesson Plan Guide**

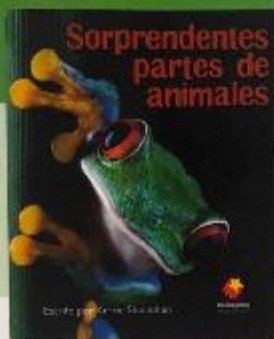


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Emergent  
reading stage

Level C (4)

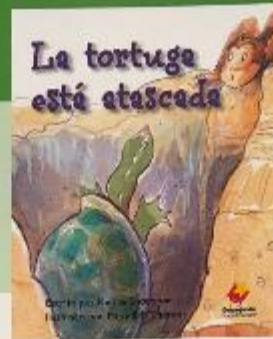
# Lesson Plans



Este libro compara y hace una correlación entre los animales que tienen diferentes partes del cuerpo.

**Running words: 101**

**Text type: Report**



Cuando la tortuga se queda atascada en un hoyo, el mono la ayuda a salir. Pero luego el mono se queda atascado también.

**Running words: 100**

**Text type: Narrative**

## Vocabulary

### High-frequency words

a algunos con del dentro dijo el entonces  
esta este gusta hacer la mi mis muchos  
no pero puedes puedo qué sacaré sacó  
salir tiene tienen un voy yo

### Key vocabulary

abajo animales babosa cata cavar cebra elefante  
gran manos mono nido ojos pata patas perro pez  
pie rodillas saltaré tigre tortuga

## Phonics

- Identifying the /m/ sound as in *mano*, *mono*, *muchos* and the /n/ sound as in *tienen*, *nariz*, *no*
- Identifying the /n/ sound in the initial, middle, and final positions

## Text features

**Sorprendentes partes de animales**  
**La tortuga está atascada**

- Photographic summary
- Illustrations support and extend the story

## Reading strategies

- Locating known and unknown words
- Using pictures to solve unknown words

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills - Sorprendentes partes de animales/La tortuga está atascada Level C (4)

### Reading: Print Awareness

**1.1(E)** Read texts by moving from top to bottom of the page and tracking words from left to right with return sweep.

### Reading: Phonological Awareness and Phonics

**1.3(C)** Use phonological knowledge to match sounds to individual letters and syllables, including hard and soft consonants.

### Reading: Strategies

**1.4(A)** Confirm predictions about what will happen next in text by "reading the part that tells".

### Reading: Comprehension

**1.14(A)** Restate the main idea, heard or read.

### Writing

**1.18(A)** Write brief stories that include a beginning, middle, and end.

### Speaking and Listening

**1.27(A)** Listen attentively to speakers and ask relevant questions to clarify information.

## Lesson 1 Sorprendentes partes de animales



### Key concepts

- All animals have body parts.
- Different animals have different body parts.

### Before reading

#### Getting ready to read

Encourage students to activate their prior knowledge. Draw a simple picture of a known animal such as a cat. Ask: *¿Qué partes tiene el cuerpo de este animal?* Use the students' ideas to label the picture. Ask students to think of another animal. Have students work with a partner and take turns saying what the animal is and the body parts it has.

#### Vocabulary building

As needed, introduce the vocabulary from the book. This can be done using the Vocabulary Starter **El cuerpo**. Refer to the teacher notes on the back of the Vocabulary Starter for ideas on how to use this resource.

#### Introducing the book

Show the students a copy of the book *Sorprendentes partes de animales*. Say: *Este libro se llama Sorprendentes partes de animales. Trata sobre animales que tienen determinadas partes en su cuerpo y otros que no las tienen.* Turn to pages 2 and 3. Say: *En esta página se habla de patas. ¿Cuáles animales aquí tienen patas? ¿Cuáles animales no tienen?* Respond using the structure of the sentences in the text. Say: *Sí, esta cebra tiene patas, pero hay animales que no tienen.* Continue turning the pages and talking about the photographs, using the structure of the sentences in the book.

### During reading

Ask each student to read the text independently. Monitor the students as they read and support them where appropriate. If necessary, ask the students to stop reading and remind them to use the reading strategies you are focused on. Check that students can locate known words in the text. Ask: *¿Puedes señalar la palabra esta? ¿Cómo sabes que dice esta?* Check that they can locate unknown words. Ask: *¿Dónde está la palabra cebra? ¿Cómo sabes que dice cebra?* If students are having difficulty, encourage them to reread and point to each word as they say it.

### After reading

#### Talking about the book

Ask the students to talk about the book. Promote discussion by choosing questions that are appropriate for your students. Ask them to support their answers by referring to the photographs and the text in the book. *¿Qué animal tiene manos? ¿Qué animales no tienen nariz? (Literal)*  
*¿Por qué los animales tienen diferentes partes en sus cuerpos? (Inferential)*  
*¿Qué otros animales y partes del cuerpo deberían haberse incluido en este libro? (Synthesizing)*  
*¿Qué necesitaba saber el autor para escribir este libro? (Critical)*

#### Reviewing reading strategies

Give positive feedback on the problem-solving strategies the students used as they read the book. Say: *Me gustó la forma en que encontraste en el texto las palabras que yo sabía.*  
*Buen trabajo.*

### Vocabulary support: Sorprendentes partes de animales/ La tortuga está atascada

Use the teacher notes on the back of the Vocabulary Starters **Mascotas**, **Animales del zoológico**,

and **El cuerpo** to support students' vocabulary.



### Key concepts

- Different animals have different body parts.
- Animals use their body parts to do different things.

## During reading

Ask each student to read the text independently. Monitor the students as they read and support them where appropriate. If necessary, ask the students to stop reading and remind them to use the reading strategies you are focused on. If the student comes to an unknown word, prompt them to look at the illustrations for a clue.

Say: ¿Qué sucede en la imagen? Ahora vuelve a mirar la palabra. ¿Qué podría decir?

## After reading

### Talking about the book

Ask the students to talk about the book. Promote discussion by choosing questions that are appropriate for your students. Ask them to support their answers by referring to the illustrations and the text in the book.

¿Cómo salió la tortuga del nido? (Literal)

¿Por qué fue bueno que la tortuga y el mono tuvieran diferentes partes del cuerpo? (Inferential)

¿Qué otro animal podría haber ayudado a la tortuga a salir del nido? (Synthesizing)

¿Crees que la tortuga fue una buena elección de personaje para esta historia? Explicarlo. (Critical)

### Reviewing reading strategies

Give positive feedback on the problem-solving strategies the students used as they read the book. For example:

Say: Buen trabajo. Me gustó la forma en que mirabas las imágenes cuando necesitabas ayuda para leer una palabra que no sabías.

## Synthesizing: Talk about the pair

After students have read both books, have them work in small groups to make a list of as many animal body parts as they can. Say: ¿Qué saben de las partes del cuerpo de los

## Returning to the book

Provide multiple opportunities for the students to read and interact with the book again - with teacher support, with a partner, and independently. Choose activities that are appropriate for your students.

## Developing fluency

Have students work in groups of three. One student reads the story, while the other two act it out. Students then swap roles. Encourage the students to read with expression.

## Word work

### Phonemic awareness and phonics

Ask students to find words in the text that have the /n/ sound. List these words in groups according to the position of the sound. For example: initial position (nido); middle position (mono); final position (gran).

### Exploring words

Write the following on a chart: -Me gusta cavar -dijo la Tortuga. Ask: ¿Qué palabra describe lo que le gusta hacer a la tortuga? Draw out that cavar is an action word. Ask: ¿Qué otras palabras describen cosas que las tortugas pueden hacer? (nadar, caminar, comer, dormir). Ask students to work with a partner to choose an animal and list five action words that their animal can do.

## Writing

### Modeled writing

Say: Voy a escribir una versión diferente de esta historia. En lugar de que el mono ayude a la tortuga a salir del nido, voy a usar otro animal. En su lugar, voy a escribir sobre un elefante. Model this writing. For example: -Tengo una trompa -dijo el elefante -Voy a sacarte del nido con mi trompa.

### Independent writing

Ask students to innovate on the text by choosing a different animal to get Turtle out of the nest. Encourage them to draw a picture that shows how the animal helps Turtle

## Sharing and presenting

Show each student's writing and drawing to the group.

animales? Have each group share their list. Have students complete the activity card.

## Returning to the book

Provide multiple opportunities for the students to read and interact with the book again – with teacher support, with a partner, and independently. Choose activities that are appropriate for your students.

## Developing fluency

Have students work with a partner and take turns reading a page aloud. Encourage students to read fluently. Say: *Traten de leer con fluidez, como si estuvieran hablando.*

## Word work

### Phonemic awareness and phonics

With a partner, have students find words in the book that have the /m/ sound (*mano, mono, muchos*) and the /n/ sound (*tienen, nariz, no*) or both. Make a chart with three sections: words with the /m/ sound, words with the /n/ sound, and words with both. Work with the students to sort the words they have found.

### Exploring words

Ask students to turn to the word bank on page 16. Ask them to work with a partner and take turns to give clues about a word in the word bank. For example: *Esta parte del cuerpo ayuda a los animales a agarrar cosas. Está al final del brazo.* Their partner tries to guess the word.

## Writing

### Modeled writing

Ask: *¿Qué animales tienen partes del cuerpo interesantes?* Make a list of the students' ideas. Say: *Voy a escribir sobre un animal que tiene una parte del cuerpo asombrosa.* Model this writing. For example: *Este cocodrilo tiene dientes asombrosos. Sus dientes son grandes y afilados.*

### Independent writing

Have students refer to the list of amazing animal parts compiled during the Modeled writing section. Have them write about an animal they think has an amazing body part and say why they think the body part is amazing. Have them illustrate their writing to show the amazing body part.

### Sharing and presenting

Display students' writing and give the students time to walk by and look at each piece. Ask: *¿Qué nueva información han aprendido?*

## Lesson 2 La tortuga está atascada



## Before reading

### Getting ready to read

Encourage students to activate their prior knowledge. Draw a picture of a monkey and a picture of a turtle on a chart. (Alternatively, you could show the students a picture of each animal.) Ask: *¿Qué partes del cuerpo tiene una tortuga?* *¿Qué partes del cuerpo tiene un mono?* *¿Qué partes del cuerpo tienen ambos?* *¿Qué parte del cuerpo tiene sólo uno de los animales?*

### Vocabulary building

As needed, introduce the vocabulary from the book. This can be done using the Vocabulary Starter **El cuerpo**. Refer to the teacher notes on the back of the Vocabulary Starter for ideas on how to use this resource.

## Introducing the book

Show the students a copy of the book *La tortuga está atascada*. Say: *Este libro se llama La tortuga está atascada. Es sobre una tortuga que queda atascada en un hoyo y un mono que la ayuda a salir.* Turn to pages 2 and 3. Ask: *¿Qué está haciendo la tortuga?* *Si, está cavando un gran nido.* Turn to pages 4 and 5. Ask: *¿Qué ha ocurrido ahora?* Respond by saying: *Si, la tortuga dice: -No puedo salir. ¡Ayuda!* Continue turning the pages and talking about the illustrations, using the structure of the sentences in the book.



# Hojas para fotocopiar

## Partes del cuerpo de los animales

Usa el banco de palabras para enumerar las partes del cuerpo que tiene cada animal.  
Agrega a cada lista otra parte del cuerpo que no esté en el banco de palabras.

### Banco de palabras

nariz	patas	ojos	rodillas	pie	cara
-------	-------	------	----------	-----	------



Insecto



Elefante

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------------------	-------------------------------

### Evaluación

¿Puede el estudiante leer y escribir vocabulario de contenido del texto?  
¿Puede el estudiante utilizar sus conocimientos sobre los animales para escribir una lista de partes del cuerpo?

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# Tarjeta de actividades

## Creación de un animal sorprendente



Crea un animal con las partes del cuerpo que desees (por ejemplo: nariz de elefante, tentáculos de pulpo, dientes de cocodrilo, alas de mariposa).

1. ¿Qué partes de animales elegirás para tu creación animal?
2. ¿Cómo se verá tu animal?

A continuación, dibuja a tu animal asombroso. Dale un nombre a este animal. Rotula las partes de su cuerpo.

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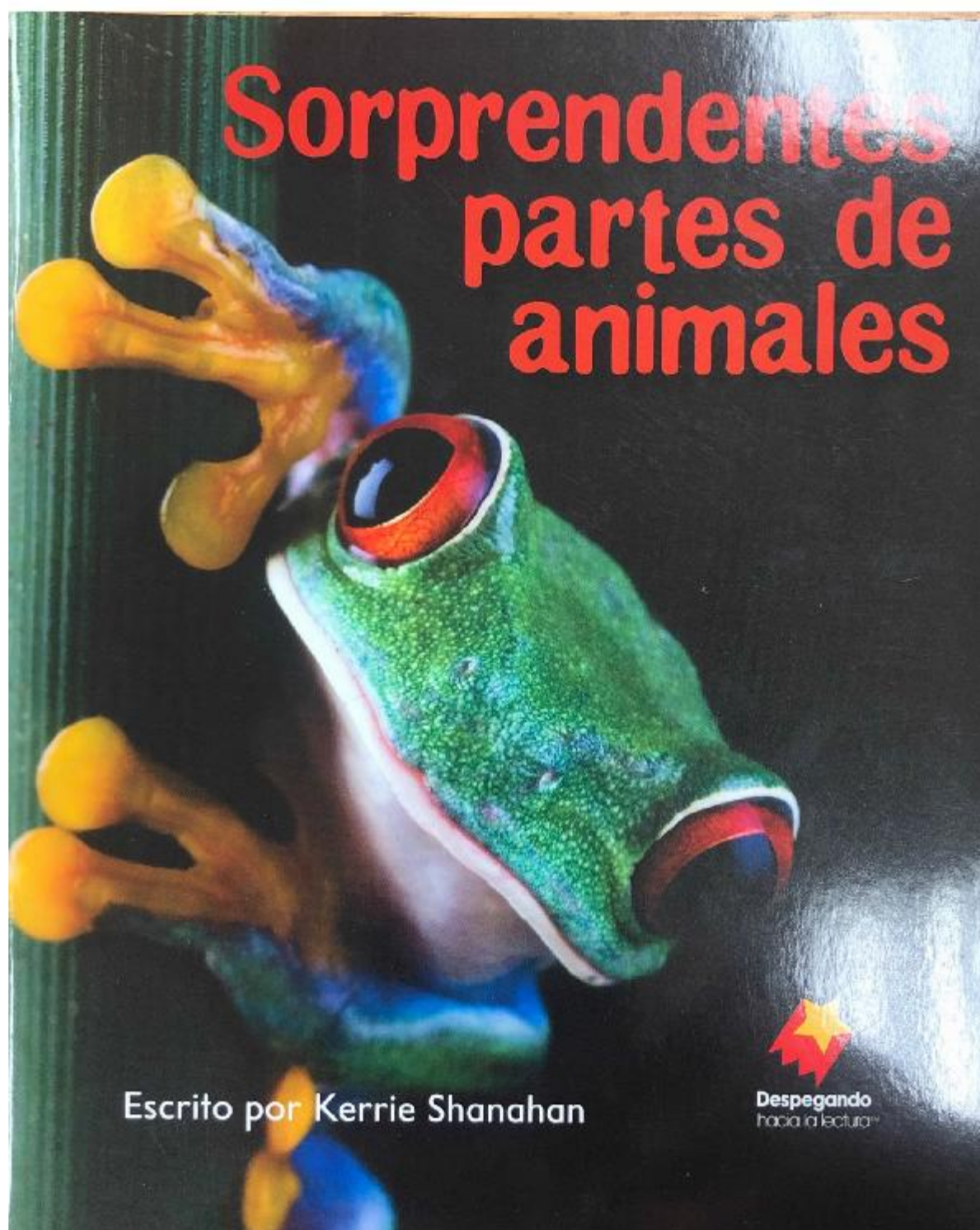
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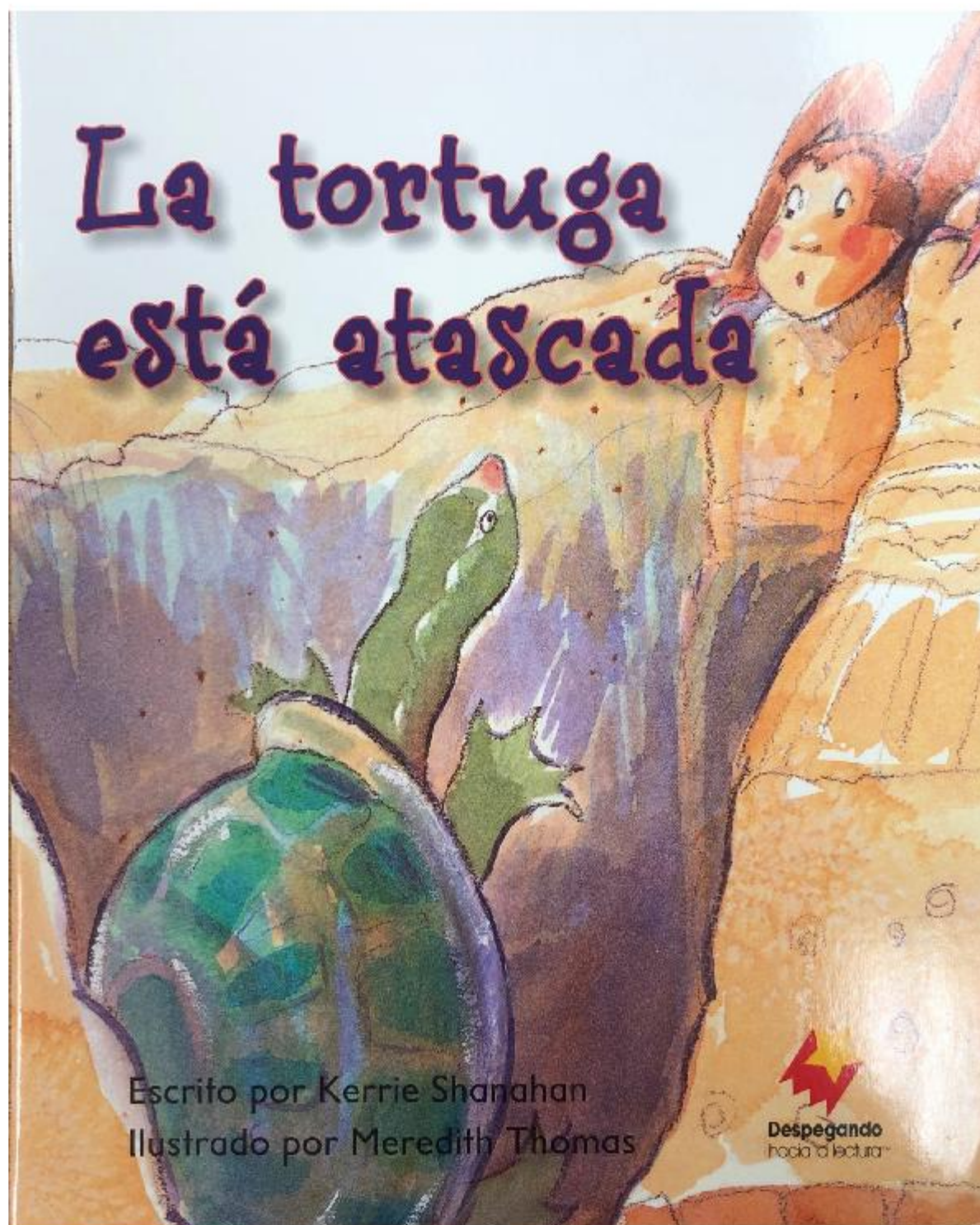
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## **Appendix E**

### **Leveled Books**

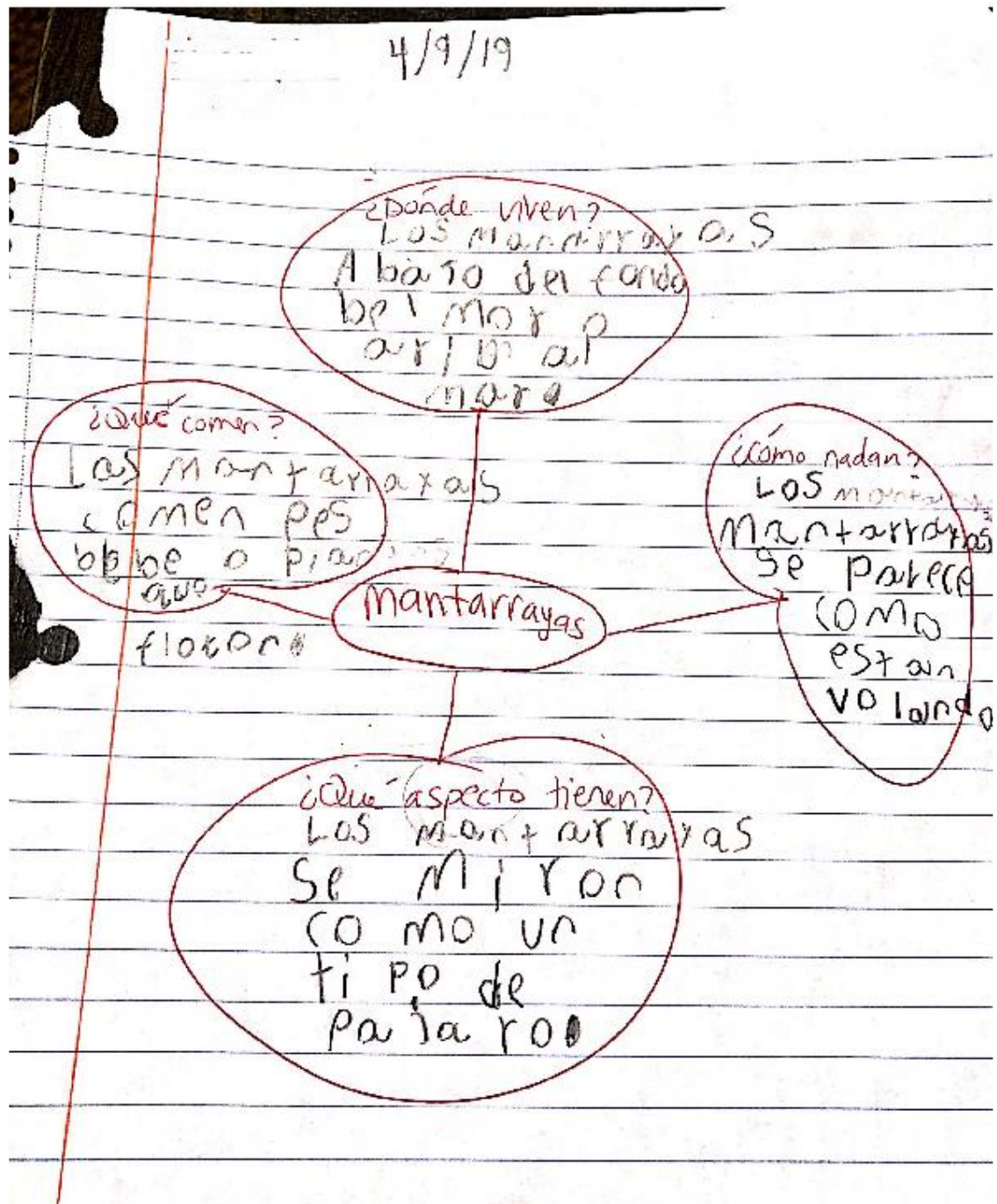






**Appendix F**  
**Observation Notes**

4/9/19





10/24/18 level 3

uses finger for one to one conference  
 - unknown words uses syllables to figure out word

- unknown words uses hands to separate into syllables.  
 - ⑤ doesn't recognize errors m/s/v not  
perga visible  
 pegar

rop ro

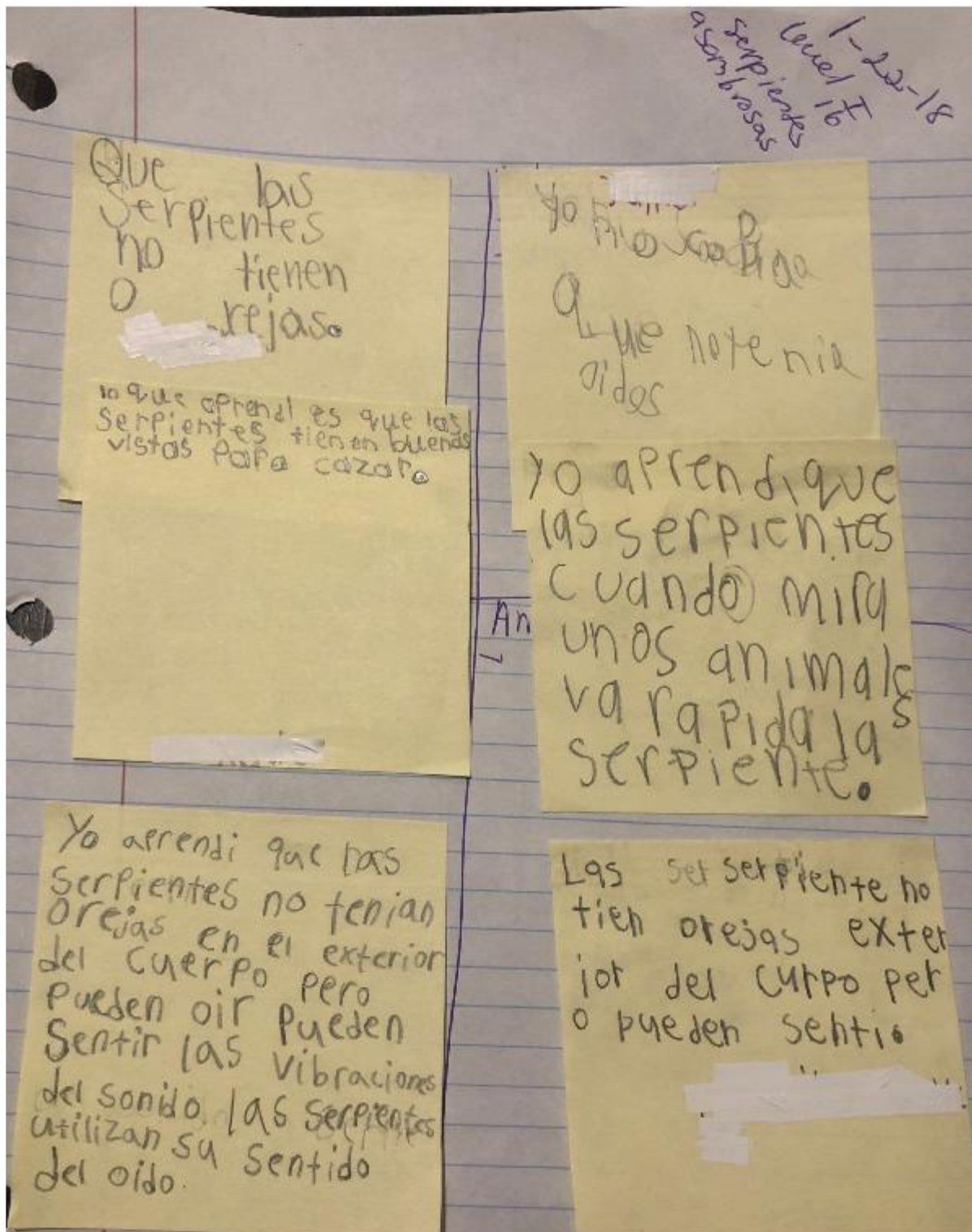
ropero

⑤ separates words in syllables  
a jugar w/ finger  
 construir

when writing words (r) is not  
 heard  
 bc of misheard sound







**Appendix G**  
**Journal Reflection Entries**

10/26/18

This week my goal was to support my students by providing positive feedback in recognizing their efforts to incorporate some of the reading behaviors we've discussed.

Student remembered to blend syllables together and reread after decoding. Her accuracy is improving. Comprehension is a key element I need to support my above level students. I noticed that they read fluently, but when asked about a detail or information from the story they are confused. Model for students how to make meaning of the text while reading, by asking ourselves questions about what is happening in the story know and what they think.



9/24/18

Working w/ (S) I learned  
that when I dictated a  
2 syllable word and asked  
to tell me how many sounds  
she hears (S) says 2 sounds.  
the word is mano  
what (S) is doing is (S) is thinking  
that the syllable is only (1)  
sound instead of 2 sounds.

\* continue to work w/ (S) on

\* letter names + sounds

provide mom w/ arch + letters  
to practice @ home

11-16-18

I notice that my student that was a non-reader is showing great progress in her reading. She began the year at a level A and is now reading at a level 6. Student works hard and gets lots of support at home. Continue to work with students on blending words together. With continuous repeated reading on a familiar text, students' fluency will improve.

It amazes me how although word recognition is low, this particular student shows great comprehension. Making meaning and connections to the text.